



















# SABBATH EVENING READINGS

ON THE

## NEW TESTAMENT.

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON  
S T . J O H N .

BY THE  
SCOTCH NATIONAL SEMINAR

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## PREFATORY REMARKS.

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JOHN was the son of Zebedee and Salome. His father was a fisherman. Peter and he seem to have been partners and joint proprietors of the little stock at Bethsaida. He was one of the Twelve, — the disciple whom Jesus loved, — a chosen witness of the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden. To him was committed the care of Mary, then a widow, and friendless in the world.

In the history of the Church subsequent to the ascension, John appears with Peter, — silent, yet full of sympathy, — living Christianity as eloquently as Peter preached it.

His pen seems to have been dipped in love. His style is simple, but singularly rich in thought. The discourses which he records as they fell from the lips of Him that spake as never man spake, give its distinguishing peculiarity to this Gospel. The inner thoughts of the Son of God stream forth in it, and make it the delight and the study of the people of God in every age and country.

It is the last of the four Gospels.

The author has appended to it a few remarkable coincidences, which link together the Gospels in one ; for which he is mainly indebted to Blunt's " Scripture Coincidences."

He has also added an Alphabetical Index to the Gospels.

The Lecturer makes no pretension to originality. He gives these Readings as they fell from his lips in the pulpit, not for the information of scholars or critics, or theologians, but for the edification of plain Christians, the instruction of ordinary families, schools, and classes. No doubt, mistakes will be found ; but, instead of taking offence at any one pointing them out, he will rather be more thankful.

May He who inspired these holy men to write them on paper, write them on our hearts, for Christ's sake. Amen.



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# SCRIPTURE READINGS.

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## EXPOSITION OF JOHN I.

CHARACTERS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS. — BEAUTY AND EXCELLENCE OF ST. JOHN'S. — JOHN'S HISTORY. — HIS RELATION TO JESUS. — GRACE NOT BY GENERATION OR SACRAMENT. — TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

HERE we begin the study of the most interesting, instructive, and beautiful of the four biographies of our blessed Lord. I know not one of the gospels so fraught with instruction, so rich in consolation, so fitted to enlighten, to improve, to impress, and build up the people of God, as the Gospel according to St. John. The Gospel of St. Matthew was written for the Hebrew, or the Jew; and every idiom and allusion in it proves this. The Gospel according to St. Mark was written for the Roman; and the repeated Latinized expressions indicate that it was so. The Gospel according to St. Luke was written for the accomplished Greek, or chief Gentiles; its commencement is in the purest style of classic Greek, and the whole indicates a tone, a cultivation, and a polish that show for whom it was meant, and that it was written by a cultivated and accomplished scholar. The Gospel of St. John was written for all believers as such in all ages of the world; it has nothing of the peculiar in it, but every thing of the universal; applicable to every

age, instructive to every class, called sometimes, by ancient writers, very justly and truly, "the Gospel of the Father." "The Father," as applied to God, occurs about seventy-two times in the Gospel according to St. John; and the great theme of the apostle that was nearest to the Saviour's bosom, that drank deepest into his spirit, is love, the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of all Christians. John, who wrote this Gospel, is also the author of the Book of Revelation. There are expressions occurring in both, that prove the authorship to be the same. The language of John is intensely Hebraistic, or Greek tinged strongly by Hebraistic idioms, just as a Scotchman's English is mixed up with what are called Scotticisms. You at once discover, by reading Luke's gospel, that he had Gentile blood in his veins, and was an accomplished Greek scholar; and you discover in a moment, by reading St. John's, that he was an uneducated man; the Holy Spirit giving inspiration from heaven to the simple, naked, and often unidiomatical words that he, the uneducated, yet inspired evangelist, employed upon earth. Only let not this be misunderstood. It does not follow because the Spirit inspires a man that he is to be, in his peculiar tone, temperament, intellectual capacities, taste, and mode of expression, something different from what he was before. The Holy Spirit inspired John, he did not extinguish John; he inspired Matthew, he did not turn Matthew into somebody else. He took the instrument as it was, and he passed through that instrument the breath of heaven, so that it should convey to mankind the sure words of righteousness and peace. And instead of this being, as some seem to dream, an objection to the inspiration of the New Testament, it is, on the other hand, its greatest glory, its most exquisite characteristic. Because, if one man had written all the New Testament in his own way, or in the best and the choicest words, it would have been extremely monotonous; it would have been instructive to the practised



and accomplished scholar, but to the mechanic, the peasant, and the ordinary reader, it would have been too high for him to understand. But by taking each man's idiosyncrasy or peculiarity of character, and making that peculiarity of character the vehicle of instructive truth, the truth influencing the vehicle, not the vehicle diluting it, he has provided a repast for every man's taste and for every variety of taste. The scholar may find what reaches the loftiest pitch of his attainments, the peasant will find what descends to the lowest level of his information; so that each immortal soul may discover in this wonderful book, so rich in its variety, and yet so pervaded by the unity of the one inspiring Spirit, what will not suffer him to go away empty from the perusal of it. It is the very beauty of this Book, that it is written in plain and simple language, arising from circumstances not peculiar to an age, but common to every age, and fitted therefore to instruct all mankind, in all the varying phases of their character and their experience. Now, I do not know of a Gospel so full of love, so rich in inexhaustible comfort, as the Gospel according to St. John. It is literally, the simplest, and sublimest, and, if one may speak by comparison, it is the most popular Gospel. It is that to which sickness has recourse, when the lights of this world grow dim, and the prospects of another begin to dawn upon the soul; it is that to which we have recourse in suffering and tears and grief; in which we find sweet springs of comfort in the hour of death. No Gospel has been so read, no book so studied: and yet the better we know it, the richer and the more instructive, not the more wearisome, it appears to us. We know that an ordinary piece of music, for instance, becomes, by frequent repetition, so unpleasant that we would rather not hear it: but the great strains of the great masters of song are so beautiful, so rich, that the oftener we hear them the more welcome they are, and the more we appreciate them. It is yet more so with this

blessed book ; the oftener we read it, the more instructive it becomes. Nobody ever wearies of these beautiful words, nobody ever objects to hear one of these chapters read, and read, and read again. It is like a precious gem ever put in new lights ; it refracts and reflects new splendor, and the oftener we see and understand it, the more we love it ; and he that knows it best wants it to be read the oftenest.

The author of this Gospel, as already stated, is John. He was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman upon the lake of Galilee. His mother was a Christian woman, Salome ; he followed the occupation of his father, namely, that of a fisherman, and about the age of twenty-five he was called to follow his blessed Master, and enlightened in the knowledge of his Messiahship, his message, and mission. It is supposed that John was born about the time that our blessed Lord was born, and that he died about a hundred years old in Ephesus, where he wrote this very Gospel. He was banished to Patmos, an island in the Ægean Sea, and on that desert rock the bright panorama of all heaven, and of the past, the present, and the future, swept before him, and he recorded it as he was inspired in the book we call the Revelation, or the Apocalypse. After he escaped from Patmos, through the accession of the Roman emperor Nerva, he went to Ephesus, a leading city of great celebrity in Asia Minor, and there it is understood he wrote this Gospel which bears his name. I need not repeat what I have said before, that the word "Gospel" is composed of two Saxon words, *god* — *spell* ; *spell* meaning "news" or "tidings ;" and means literally, "the good tidings," "the good news," or "the glad tidings." John does not give an account of the birth of Christ : it evidently appears that this Gospel was written after the other three in point of time ; it was written in all probability — no, not probability, but to a certainty — after the destruction of Jerusalem. It is a record, not of the birth, but of the ministry of Jesus. Hence,

it begins first with a statement of what Christ was, what Christ had become, and at once he presents the Redeemer entering on his official ministry, and says nothing about his birth, which had been fully and minutely delineated by previous evangelists. And you will be struck, if you will take up a comparison of the Gospels written by any one who has paid attention to the subject, — with the perfect harmony that subsists between each of the four evangelists, writing from different countries, viewing the Saviour at different angles, and each stating the facts which came before his own personal and immediate inspection.

Now, John says nothing about the birth of Christ, but he proceeds at once to state the sum and the substance of the ministry of Jesus, as preceded by John the Baptist, according to the prophecy in the last chapter of the book of Malachi, — that God should send his messenger before him, to prepare the way of the Lord. He at once begins by asserting the Deity of Christ as God and Lord of all; and he states, “In him was life,” — that is, original, unborrowed, underived. In us there is a streamlet from the Fountain of Life; in him was the Fountain of Life. Our life is something we receive, something that the Giver takes back again to himself, — over which we have no control, and for which we must give God the account and the praise. But in Jesus was life underived, unborrowed; he was the Life; and that Life, it is said, “was the light of men.” It is remarkable, in this Gospel, that life is constantly associated with light: that is a great analogy that we can discover in this world ourselves. If there were no light, all vegetation would die, all animal life would in all probability die also. I believe there are three things that man’s health is very much indebted to; that is, pure food, pure air, and pure light. If you take a geranium or a rose-tree, and keep it away from the light, you will soon see it begin to pine away, and fade, and become white, and ultimately die; although it will put

forth shoots in all directions, struggling and searching, if peradventure it may reach that which is its life, the light of heaven. This is an illustration of heavenly and spiritual things; life is associated with light. If we have no light from the Sun of Righteousness, we cannot have life. If we have no knowledge, we cannot be learned. It is, "Sanctify them through thy truth," — that is, Make them holy through knowing my word. Light and life are indissoluble, and he that has not the one must remain destitute of the other.

Then says John, very truly, "The light" — that is, Christ — "shineth in darkness," — that is, in the world, — "and the darkness," instead of welcoming that which had come to irradiate and to scatter it, "comprehended and received it not." He then says, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." What different language is applied to John from that which is applied to Christ! "In the beginning was the Word," describes Christ. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." And this John came not the Light, for that he was not; but he came a witness, "to bear witness of that Light." There is the office of the minister, — not to take Christ's place, or to arrogate to himself Christ's glory, but simply to be a sign-post pointing out the way, a witness attesting the glory, a voice in the desert, "Behold the Lamb."

In order to be still more decisive, he says, "John was not that Light, but was sent for this one office, — to bear witness of that Light." Now, this is the function of every minister of the gospel; his office is not to attach the people's sympathies to himself, but to lift the people's sympathies above himself, till they rest upon Christ and him crucified. The minister of the gospel is not the Light, but a witness to it; is not the Saviour, but a voice crying in the wilderness, "Behold the Lamb of God." It says, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." He was "in the world, and the world was made by him,

and," — oh terrible depths into which that world had sunk in aberration and degradation, this world that he made knew not its Maker when its Maker came to it! — "the world knew him not." But "he came to *his own*," — not only to the world, but he came to those very Jews that he had set apart for himself, — "and," no less painful result, "his own received him not." What an awful fact is this! that the Maker of the world came to his own house, and the tenant that was in it by his sufferance repelled him from it. You have all read of the beautiful sentiment of Plato, who, with Socrates his master, seems to have stood upon the loftiest pinnacle of earth, and to have caught some beams of the approaching light: he said, "If perfect truth and holiness were to come down to our world, the whole world would be so charmed with his beauty, that it would fall down and worship him." We have no longer Plato's statement as a hypothesis, but Plato's conjecture differently fulfilled as a melancholy fact. What he supposed has come to pass. Truth came to our world; but, alas! the hospitality that the philosopher expected was denied to it; for "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." "But," it says, "as many as received him" — showing there was an election according to grace — "as many as received him, to them gave he power" — jurisdiction, privilege — "to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now, here is regeneration stated to us. He says true Christians are born "not of blood," — that is to say, grace is not inherited. Sometimes a very bad father has a godly son; and at other times a Christian father has a profligate son. What does that prove? That grace is not by blood: that we are saved not by race. It is perfectly true, — "Train up a child in the way he *should* go;" not, as some people very foolishly read it, "in the way he *would* go."

“Train up a child ;” not only teach, it is of no use to teach if you do not train. If you were to tell a vine to grow up a pole before training it, it would not do so. You must train it, and help it onwards on its way. And so it is with a child ; you must not only tell him to do this, but you must put him in the way of doing it. You must not only say to the child, when there is a collection for a Bible Society, “It is right and proper to give something ;” but you must say to the child, “Begin to give a halfpenny, and as you grow older and richer increase it to a penny ; and as you get older and richer still, increase it to a pound :” and by teaching your children to give, you do more to make them liberal and all mankind blessed, than by all the cold lessons that you can shower down like snow-flakes in the shape of cold and unimpressive advice. Then Christians are “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man.” Now I need no other clause than this to put an end to what is called baptismal regeneration. If baptism be the regeneration of a man’s heart, then regeneration is by the will of man ; because, if by baptizing a man I can regenerate his heart, I have only to specify the day, the hour, and by my will, and at my determination, the man shall be regenerated and born again. But, says the sacred penman, regeneration is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man ; but it is “of God.” And how does God act ? In sovereignty. “The wind bloweth where it listeth.”

## CHAPTER I. 45-51.

MISSIONARY NATURE OF TRUE CHRISTIANITY. — EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION. — PREJUDICE. — RESULTS OF PERSONAL EXAMINATION. — PUPIL OUTGROWS HIS TEACHER. — EULOGY AND PROMISE OF JESUS.

WE have here a specimen of a true Christian home-missionary in the case of Philip : and we have, in the case of Nathanael, a sincere Christian, with less light than grace, but holding the truth that he had most sincerely ; and therefore not suffered to grope in darkness, but enlightened more and more till he reached unto the perfect day. In these two characters we see one having so much light and grace that he had, as it were, to spare for others, or at least he felt it his privilege to go and tell them where they might find grace and light ; and the other with little light, but sincere in holding the little that he had ; and with more grace than light, which enabled him to act up to the light that he had ; and therefore, not left in darkness ; but he that hath, having added to what he hath ; while they that have not, have taken from them even that which they have.

Now, in the case of the first, namely Philip, finding Nathanael, and coming to him, we have evidence that true grace never rests satisfied with its own existence, or anchors in itself. True grace always longs to diffuse itself ; it cannot consent to be passive, its very nature is active, penetrating, aggressive ; whilst there is a sinner to be saved, grace in an enlightened heart never can be satisfied. It is the seed, the living seed, cast into the living soil of a renewed

and regenerate heart, and there it bears fruit, and increaseth more and more. Therefore Philip, having found grace, light, and life, goes to Nathanael, and tells Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets have written."

And, in the next place, where there is true grace in the heart it is not satisfied with desiring to teach, and convert, and enlighten them that are brought in the providence of God within its reach; but it goes and seeks and finds out those who are not within its reach, and tries to teach them that more excellent way. For Philip *findeth* Nathanael; he must have been looking for him; just as in a previous chapter we find Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, first finding his own brother Simon, and saying to him, "We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." Then we have Philip of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter, brought also to the Saviour; and then Philip evidently looking out for subjects of the influence of his principles, and imparting to one of them that he found out—Nathanael—the knowledge of Christ and of salvation. Thus, wherever there is true Christianity, it is not only diffusive over them that are brought in the providence of God within its power; but it is essentially proselytizing in the highest and holiest sense of the word. It seeks out them that are ignorant, and rests not till Philip finds Nathanael, and tells him of Christ the only Saviour. A very beautiful peculiarity of true grace, or real Christianity, is, that it does not diminish by imparting, it does not exhaust itself by enlightening others. The very contrary is the fact. One candle can light a thousand, but it has parted with nothing of its own light in consequence; and so one Christian may be the instrument of enlightening a whole village, and he will find that instead of losing he gains, that grace grows by giving, and that the more he makes known to others of the riches of that grace, he has the more, and



finds grace in his own heart grow in fertility and in vigor. It seems a law of God that all great things are made greater by sacrifice. A great man always looks greater when he is humble ; a rich man becomes richer by liberality ; having is increased by giving. And you will find it a great fact if you will read biographies or watch the world, that no truly liberal man who gives with both hands ever dies a pauper ; and that no close-fisted man who grasps with both hands ever dies a very rich, or at least a very happy man. It seems to be a law that God has ever exemplified in the history and experience of mankind, "It is more blessed to give than it is to receive."

We have, in the next place, in this interesting picture, a specimen of one of the most efficient means of instructing others — it is by personal and private interviews. It is true that from the pulpit, speaking to the masses, saving impressions are made, and will be made, and have been made ; but it is no less true, that some amid the multitude receive a truth just as twelve paupers receive a loaf ; each takes his own share of it, which is very small ; and it is so diffused over the masses that each individual feels little, or takes little of it home to his own heart. It ought not to be so ; but practically it often is so. But when you speak to the individual — when you visit the cottage, the home, or the sick-bed, and speak to the individual calmly, quietly, gently, face to face, you may drop a seed that will flourish when you are gone, you may utter a word that will have its echoes in many days to come. Philip findeth Nathanael, and to Nathanael alone he speaks about the things that belong to the kingdom of heaven.

In the next place, we have a specimen too of the most effective missionary action, when preaching comes from the depth of one's experience. Philip says to Nathanael, not, "There *is* a Saviour of whom Moses speaks ;" but, "We have found him," — that is, It is with me no longer a spec-

ulative dogma outside the house, but a vital truth receiving hospitality in my heart, and making me happier, and wiser, and holier, and better. "And therefore," as if he had said to Nathanael, "I tell you not of something external to us both; but I tell you what I have tasted, and handled, and found, and seen; and I can say to you, Come, as the Psalmist said of old, and I will tell you what God hath done for my soul." True, truth preached by one who has not the experience of its power is still truth, and may be blessed of God; but there is in the truth preached by one who himself has in his heart received it that which gives it a lifelike character, a freshness and a force that provokes responsive feelings in them that hear; and you cannot but be persuaded by one who can say, "What we have seen, and heard, and handled of the Word of Life, that we declare unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us; and truly such fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." But while Philip speaks from his own personal experience of the truth, he takes care not to do so in such a way as to rest it entirely there. On the contrary, he goes beyond himself to the direct testimony, God's word. "We have found him"—there is my experience; but he says, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Truth felt within is most precious, but truth attested without is most clear. We must not be satisfied with the outer testimony of the Word alone, nor with the inner testimony of the Spirit alone; but we must have both—the outward word exercising its influence within, and which enables us to say, "We know in whom we have believed," and that Christ is our Saviour, not because he is so described in the Bible, but because we have so felt his transforming influence in our own hearts. Then you will observe what he says of Jesus here—he describes him as spoken of in the law and in the prophets. Moses speaks of "a Prophet like unto

himself, unto whom ye shall hearken in all things ;” Isaiah, in his 53d chapter, speaks of Christ as “one of the prophets ;” and I have no doubt there was an emphasis in these words which he felt : “*Him* of whom the prophets and Moses spake.” Many of the Jews were extremely puzzled by the portrait of Christ in prophecy. They read in one part, “He is the mighty God ;” they read in another part, “He is a man of sorrows :” they read in one part, “He is on the throne ;” they read in another, “He is on the cross.” They could not understand how one Messiah could be both ; and some of them even thought in their ignorance there would be two Messiahs. “Now,” says Philip, “we have found him in whom all the majesty of God and all the weakness of man are met together ; we have found one who corresponds to the Messiah described by Isaiah, when he calls him the Mighty God ; and we have found one who corresponds to the prophet spoken of by Moses and the prophets ; and this Being, at once divine and human, is “Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.”

Now when Nathanael heard this very short, but very simple and very conclusive sermon, he received it just as many people receive no less good news in the present day. His prejudice had to a great extent barred his mind against the reception of the truth ; and he said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?” Many people in the present day do not ask, “Is the doctrine true ?” but “Who is he that says it ?” They do not ask, “Is Christianity true ?” but, “Who are its advocates ?” They estimate truth by the numbers that accept it, or by the influence, the power, or patronage that take it up. They look at it through the mist of prejudice, or through the distorting medium of passion ; and they will not even examine, search, inquire, but repudiate the thing from the very beginning, because of mere traditional prejudice. “Can any good thing be in the Scotch Church ?” “Can there be any good thing in a Dis-

sending Chapel?" "Can there be evangelical religion in the Church of England?" And they will not go where there is a preacher of truth, because he does not use their shibboleth, wear their robes, worship in their form, and accept their ceremonies! We must learn to see that there are good things often where we least expect them, and bad things where we think there is the greatest amount of goodness. We must take truth on its own merits, on the evidence by which it is proved to be so. If minorities are on its side we cannot help it; if majorities are on its side we are very thankful. If truth leads to losses, we may regret it; if it leads to gain, we are thankful.

"Seize on truth, where'er 't is found,  
Among her friends, among her foes,  
On Christian, or on heathen ground,  
The flower's divine where'er it grows."

The true, and short, and simple, and satisfactory reply was given by Philip: "You have a prejudice, Nathanael; it would take many hours' talking and arguing to cast this prejudice out of your mind, of which it has taken possession; but I have a very short and a very satisfactory prescription. You ask, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'" "Come and see;" that is the best way. Do not take my opinion nor believe my testimony, but judge for yourself, and if you are not satisfied, then forgive my weakness; if you are satisfied, then thank me as the instrument; and I am sure that if you come and see you will be satisfied." Now this is the best way to ascertain the evidence of the power of the gospel or the proofs of Christianity; it is the shortest way. I do not say that this would apply for instance in medicine. If we were to taste some drug to see whether it would do us good or not, it might be productive of mischief. But we are so sure that this religion cannot do us any harm, and we never heard anybody say that it

does so ; and we are so certain it must do good, that we can say to the most sceptical, Just come and make trial of it, and see if it does not make you a happier, a wiser, a better man. If it fail, then you have lost nothing ; if it succeed, then you have gained the very kingdom of heaven itself. Do you wish to apply and illustrate this expression ? “ Come and see.”

Christianity transforms the heart. Come and try it, and see if that be not its effect. Has not the drunkard become sober ? has not the churl become liberal ? have not the dishonest become honest ? have not the profligate become pure, and correct, and holy in their conduct ? And have not all of them together acknowledged that in the gospel there was what proved to them the savor of life ? They came and saw ; they remain, and worship, and adore, and praise. Do you doubt the influence of the gospel again on countries ? Do you think there cannot be a Christian country ? Just come and see. Look at nations that are without religion, or at nations that are under a corrupt religion ; — and the corruption of the best religion is always the worst thing. Come and see a nation that has education saturated by living religion ; come and see a nation where the gospel is fully and faithfully and everywhere preached ; where families worship, where communities wait upon the outward service of God. Come and see them, and you will find the difference between the first and the last unspeakable. You will learn that righteousness does exalt a nation ; that the absence of it, or the contrary of it, is the ruin of any nation. If you wish to know that there is a transforming power in this religion, take any sphere, any platform that you like, and wherever the experiment has been honestly made the result has invariably followed of “ glory to God, on earth peace, good-will among mankind.” Do you again doubt whether this religion can comfort and console you in trouble ? Ask those who have tried it, — ask the widow, the orphan,

the sick, the suffering, the afflicted, the dying, and they will all tell you that they have found in this Book prescriptions that have been power, that they have found in that Saviour the consolation of Israel; that they have tasted in this gospel compensatory virtues that have made their light affliction, which was but for a moment, not worthy to be compared with the glory that this blessed book reveals. And if you yourselves are afflicted, troubled, cast down, try the cisterns of this world, and you will find them broken cisterns; seek the sympathy of Christ, look to Him who alone can save, and sanctify, and comfort, and you will find that his consolations are not few.

We find here an illustration of the effect of the experiment, "Come and see." Nathanael, prejudiced, as he was, had the good sense to take the advice of Philip his teacher. Nathanael was a Jew, with a great many Jewish prejudices, but with a great deal of Jewish piety. And there were true believers among the Jews, ready to hail the Saviour when that Saviour was presented to them. And it is said therefore of Nathanael, when he came, that Jesus saw him coming to him. "Philip saith to him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" That was a high character; as much as to say, "Here is a Jew who is very much superior to the mass of the Jews around him, and he is an Israelite in whom is no duplicity, crookedness of mind. He is a man that has not much light, but he acts up to the light that he has. He is a man who never does a disingenuous thing, though many times he may do an imperfect thing; but whatever he does, it is sincere, honest, inwardly in his heart what it looks outwardly in his life. Sincerity in error will not save you, and insincerity in truth will not save you. A man who is sincerely wrong is not therefore justified, any more than a man who is insincerely right. Sincerity is a beautiful grace, without which there cannot be

true religion ; but there may be false religion with perfect sincerity. But this we are sure of, that he who sincerely acts up to the light that he has, will not be left to grope in final darkness. The humblest inquirer who has honestly doubted of Christianity, is nearer the kingdom of heaven than the most enlightened orthodox professor, who knows the truths in the Bible, but has not with the heart received, or in the life exhibited, any of them. It is therefore sincerity that seems to be essential to the saving influence of truth, though in itself not a saving grace.

When Jesus uttered these words, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," Nathanael said unto him, "Whence knowest thou me?"—I am a stranger to you, how is it that thou knowest me? "Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." In other words, Christ saw Nathanael before Nathanael saw Christ ; and so it is still. Christ sees his people before they see him, calls them before they answer him, takes notice of them before they take notice of him. But the effect of this upon Nathanael was remarkable. Nathanael saw in "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," as Philip called him, something more than that ; for he instantly turns round and says, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God ; thou art the King of Israel." Now how beautiful is this ! The pupil rises to a loftier position than his teacher ; Philip the teacher saw Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph ; Nathanael the pupil, sincerely accepting what he was taught, rises to a higher level, sees Jesus the Son of God, the King of Israel. Thus the congregation may outgrow the pastor, the pupil may excel the teacher ; Nathanael became wiser than Philip, his first and earliest instructor. Jesus was so pleased with Nathanael's progress that he said to him, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these." Because you have acted up to the light

that you had, because you have expressed conviction exactly the measure of what you felt, I will carry you on from grace to grace, from light to light. "Thou shalt see greater things than these." And the first great thing you will see is what Philip had not yet seen,—the Son of God, the great Mediator, like Jacob's ladder, uniting together heaven and earth; God with man, and man with God, and heaven and earth once united again, never to be separated.

We may have many flaws and imperfections, and yet be Christians. Nathanael was a Christian without guile, but with much darkness and many defects. It perhaps remains to be seen how many errors may cleave to an individual who is notwithstanding a true Christian; how there may be very little light, and yet enough to see Christ the Mediator, the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. Many a one cannot express his Christianity with his lips when asked to give a reason for the faith that is in him, who loves it and would die for it if needs be. But because Christianity is accompanied by much imperfection, we must not be satisfied with what we have, but press onwards to things that are before, growing in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER II.

FIRST MIRACLE. — A FESTAL SCENE. — MARY PRESENT. — MARIOL-  
ATRY. — VULGATE VERSION. — THE FATHERS. — WATER MADE  
WINE. — DRUNKENNESS. — CLEANSING THE TEMPLE.

It does seem not the least beautiful characteristic of the blessed Gospel, that it dawned on mankind not in the shape of anathema or a judgment, or even of sadness, but of a nuptial benediction. The first miracle that Jesus wrought was not at the grave, where the mourners deplored the burial of the dead, but in the festal hall, where friends and relatives rejoiced together at the marriage of the living. It was at a marriage in Cana of Galilee. It shows us that Jesus sanctioned joyous scenes, as well as prepared us to sympathize with sorrow in suffering ones. It seems as if he would go forth to rejoice with them that did rejoice, before he went out to weep with them that did weep. And the whole of this interesting and beautiful narrative proves that the religion of Jesus, the blessed Gospel, is not hostile to the innocent enjoyments of mankind, but sweetens, consecrates, and sanctifies them. It is a great mistake to suppose that true religion makes men anchorites and monks, and women nuns ; it does no such thing. It asks men to be *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Our blessed Master will preside wherever the heart beats happy, wherever the festive scene is, provided there be nothing in it inconsistent with purity, with holiness, with truth and righteousness. It is stated, as an incident in the scene. "The mother of Jesus was there." It is after this instance, that you will see Mary

the mother of Jesus retreat into the shadow, and Jesus, the Son of God, become all and in all. I have not the least doubt that this instance is stated with prophetic reference. Jesus saw the place that Mary would be forcibly lifted to in the practice of a corrupt Church ; and in order to anticipate the perversion of a holy relationship, and to give a right idea of the place she ought to occupy, this incident is so graphically recorded. “ And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.” He did not say, “ It is wrong to go there ; ” he did not say, “ It is incompatible with my position to be there.” There are Christians in this world who have, not pure consciences, but very scrupulous consciences. They would have said, “ We ought not to go there ; it is too joyous and too glad a scene.” But they would have concluded wrong. Wherever the blessed Master went, there the holiest and the best of his people may go. Wherever you can ask no blessing upon what you engage in, there you ought not to be ; but where you can ask a blessing upon what you engage in, there you need not be afraid to be, if summoned to it in the good providence of God.

It seems that on this occasion the entertaining parties wanted wine ; or, as it ought to be justly translated, “ The wine failed.” The expression, “ They wanted wine,” is very much like the idiom of the French. It means wine failed, or wine ran short. “ The mother of Jesus,” we read, “ saith unto him, They have no wine ” — wine is wanting. Now, various interpretations or explanations have been given of this. Some think she knew that he could do miracles, though this is the first miracle he did, and she could have had no precedent to sanction her in this belief. Others think that she wanted him to retire from the festival because the wine failed, — as she would not expose the poverty and necessity of her relatives, to whose festival she was on this occasion invited. And others think that she

said so simply as a remark, "They have no wine;" and she expressed her regret and her grief that it was so. You may put any of these interpretations on the text: the words are given: the explanation is not added; for the Scriptures reveal all that is important for us to know, nothing to satisfy the mere idle curiosity of the reader. Then, Jesus, apparently understanding that she wished him to work a miracle; that she hinted the duty of working a miracle; or at least his duty to supply from his natural resources the deficiency that was obvious enough in the provision for the marriage feast, answers, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." This reply exterminates at once the Mariolatry, as it has been called, of the Roman Catholic Church. The expression, "woman," however, it is right to notice, is not disrespectful; it is not a harsh expression; it is frequently applied in Scripture, and denotes respect. It is something like "lady" — "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" And Jesus meant that to teach what he afterwards teaches in the gospel, that her relationship to him as a mother must now retreat into the background; while his relationship to the Father of all and the brethren must alone be prominent, luminous, and visible.

Hence, on subsequent occasions, when they said to him, "Thy mother and thy brethren are waiting without;" his answer was, "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren, but they that hear the word of God and do it?" Let us notice in the whole history of Jesus the gradual retreat of Mary into the obscurity that belongs to her, and the gradual procession of Jesus into the glory that he had with the Father before the world was. This translation, "What have I to do with thee?" I believe, is scarcely correct; but instead of accepting a softer translation, as the Romanists would have, it appears to me that it is susceptible of a much more decided one. It is not, "What have I to do with

thice?" but really, "What hast thou to do with me?" That is the true rendering. The words are in the original, *Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί*; and according to the Greek idiom, the *σοί* is the leading pronoun; and therefore it ought to be, "What hast thou to do with me?" not, "What have I to do with thee?" Jesus had much to do with her; he had to wash her spirit in his precious blood, and to admit her, a poor sinner, to everlasting joy: but she had nothing to do with him in the way of helping him. He must tread the winepress alone; of the people there must be none with him: he must suffer alone, die alone, and so receive the glory alone; and as no one shared in his sorrows, none must share in his glory and his exaltation.

Now, let me state here what has been said before, but not on that account the less valuable — that the Greek words here rendered, "What have I to do with thee?" occur in the Septuagint translation out of the Hebrew into Greek of the Old Testament and in the Greek New Testament about twelve times. I have searched them out very carefully. They occur about twelve times. Now, in the Roman Catholic version of the Bible, which they say is the best, eleven times they translate the words precisely as we do — "What have I to do with thee?" but the twelfth time they translate the words, "What is to thee and to me?" Now, you ask, where does the twelfth occur? It occurs in this very passage. Is it not singular that in eleven instances they render the words exactly as we do; but in the twelfth instance, which happens to refer to a peculiar dogma of their own, they give a novel, and, I venture to assert, an unmeaning translation? Every Greek scholar knows that their translation — the Roman Catholic translation — is most rigidly literal, but it is most incorrect; and everybody that is acquainted with French, or German, or Greek, or Latin, knows quite well that the rendering of a phrase word for word will often make nonsense of it; whereas, an idiom in

any language requires to be rendered not word for word, but strictly, and properly, and justly into a corresponding idiom in another language. The Roman Catholic translation is literally correct, but morally and truly wrong. They themselves are the best proofs of it; — that in eleven instances they have rendered the words exactly as we do; but in the twelfth case, which relates to the Virgin Mary, evidently suspecting that it tells upon that doctrine, they have diluted and rendered them by a new, a strange, and, I venture to assert, unmeaning phrase — “What is to thee and to me?”

In the next place, I have been at the trouble — having paid some attention to this subject, and therefore it is right to state it on this occasion — to refer to the writings of what are called the Fathers; those that I have looked into especially are the writings of Chrysostom, and Jerome, and Tertullian, and the earlier Fathers, both of the Eastern and the Western branches of the visible Church. I think every father — (I will not say every father, lest there might be an exception, but almost every father, every one that I have consulted; and I have searched the best edition of them — the Benedictine edition) — regards the words of Jesus on this occasion as a rebuke. Chrysostom says, that Jesus on this occasion rebuked her, *σφοδρότερον*, that is, rather sharply. Another father says, that upon this occasion Jesus repelled the intrusion of his mother. Our Roman Catholic friends are bound, and every convert to that Church is bound, by the creed which he repeats, — “I will never take and interpret the Scriptures, unless according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.” Now I assert, — and I challenge the most accomplished scholar in the Roman Catholic Church to contradict what I assert, — that the fathers are nearly unanimous in declaring that Jesus rebuked the Virgin Mary upon this occasion. And if so, the Roman Catholics are bound to interpret accordingly; while they really do not do so, as

their use of this passage most clearly proves. The fact is, they treat the Fathers like slaves. Whilst the Fathers seem to support their opinions, they are "the glorious Fathers;" but whenever the Fathers choose to say what the Church of Rome does not like, then she dismisses them, and puts them in the background, and sends them away from her presence as not worthy of deference. The real truth is, the Church of Rome assumes dictatorial power; and everybody that speaks with her and echoes her sentiments is every thing that is good; but anybody, from the first Father to the last Reformer, that dares to think for himself, or to speak honestly what he thinks, is a heretic, a schismatic, to be punished with fire, the fagot, and the sword, or any other canonical weapons that the popes of that Church may have consecrated for such purposes.

Mary, conscious of her rebuke, "saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do:" as much as to say, "Do not mind me; I have no authority, I have no jurisdiction." "What he saith unto you, do." Not, "What I say unto you, do." How inconsistent is this with the language of "The Glories of Mary," a book published under the sanction and authority of Cardinal Wiseman in 1853. The Roman Catholics there celebrate her as the Queen of heaven, with power and jurisdiction over her Son; poor Mary had no such knowledge of, nor any such power, for she turns away the thoughts of the people from the mother, and fixes them upon him who alone has authority, and jurisdiction, and power; saying, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do."

We read there were "six waterpots of stone;" these were filled with water up to the brim. It was an immense quantity; I do not know how many gallons; I should say several hundred; it must have been a very large quantity. "And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast;" and, instead of water, they drew

out wine. Now here some object, especially those who have very strict, not temperance, but abstinence notions. They say—at least some have said; I do not think Christian persons would say so in this country—that it was very strange, that Jesus actually turned some hundred gallons of water into wine; whereas, if he had desired that temperance should prevail, he would have only turned one of these waterpots, containing some few gallons of water, into wine. Now, my answer is simply this:—it is not the quantity of wine that makes the drunkard, but it is the depravity of the heart and spirit of the man that makes the drunkard. For instance, one who is really temperate would drink from a cask of twenty gallons, and not get drunk; one who is a drunkard will drink from a gallon, a bottle, or a single quart, and get intoxicated. It is not, you observe, the quantity that is in the landlord's cellar, but the character that is in the landlord's heart that is the secret of intemperance. And, therefore, our blessed Lord turning so many gallons of water into wine was not an encouragement of intoxication, any more than a glorious vintage is an encouragement to intoxication. The vintage in France last year was most defective; you will find men will not be a bit more sober who are disposed to indulge in excess in consequence. On the other hand, in another year we may have a glorious vintage, but that will not make men more intoxicated.

The truth is, no mechanical arrangement, no shutting of shops, will ever make men sober. What is wanted is the change of heart, the transformation of the spirit, the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit of God. Most entirely do I agree with the Abstinence Society in their movement, that if possible all those public-houses and gin-shops should be wholly shut upon Sunday. They are now shut till one o'clock, and I think it would be well were they shut all the day. An admirable law, prevailing or proposed, I have heard, in America, is, that any person that goes into

a public-house on Sunday is not obliged to pay for what he drinks. Now, if our Government would pass a law that any thing had in public-houses on that day there should be no obligation to pay for, I think that would contribute materially to put an end to drunkenness on the Sabbath. It would be an admirable regulation, and could do no harm to either party. But still, all this at best would be mere mechanical adjustment, and not moral reformation. At the same time, much less of alcohol might be used by all than is used. A person in perfect health does not require alcoholic liquors. I use the word alcohol for all the different spirituous liquors, for they are all the same thing, the coloring matter or essential oil being the chief difference. I do not think that a person in perfect health requires such stimulants. You may take them if you like. They are good in cholera, and some other diseases, as physicians will tell you; but to a person in perfect health, I doubt if they do any good at all. At the same time I cannot see my way to conclude with my temperance friends, whose principles I respect most profoundly, whose efforts and energies are most philanthropic, that the working man, who toils twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours a day, eats very little meat and very poor bread, should not be allowed his beer. I am quite sure that beer is most useful to the working man in moderation, and there is nothing in Christianity that forbids it; and I think we have no right to take away from him what in moderation must do him good, and is not forbidden, or likely to injure the claims and the progress of the gospel of Christ Jesus. But those who have plenty of good food might take less of alcoholic stimulants than they do. Yet this passage proves more than this. I am at liberty to take wine when it is essentially necessary to my health, and not to take it if I think it is of no use. But more than this, at the marriage festival Jesus wrought the miracle not to supply what was necessary for their health, but what contributed to their enjoyment.



And therefore I maintain that it is lawful to take wine in moderation, not only as a medicine, but as an enjoyment. Whenever men profess or try to be holier than Christ they will end in the very reverse; and when we try to act on principles purer than those of the New Testament, we run the risk of landing in evil. In its place, at the proper time, it is right to take wine as an enjoyment; and my authority is the example of our blessed Lord. Now I never can take up the principle avowed by some on this subject, as long as I read this chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. I can conceive teetotalism expedient, I can respect the conscience of them that think so; I wish every success to their efforts in making men take less of alcoholic stimulants; but I never can admit the principle that it is wrong to take wine even as an enjoyment, whilst this chapter stands in the Bible.

After this, our blessed Lord went into the temple; and we read that there were there "those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting." This was necessary, in order to change the Roman coin into the local or the sacred coins of the sanctuary. But instead of facilitating this change, they had made the outer courts of the temple almost houses of business: they had turned sanctuaries into shops, and the sacred temple into a grand exchange. Jesus went in with all the authority of a king, and "drove out the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves," — there is something very instructive in this: he drove out the sheep and the oxen, he overturned the tables of the money-changers; but "he said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence" — because the offering of the doves belonged to the poor, the rest belonged to the rich. Then he said, "Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandise:" "for it is

written," as he said in another Gospel, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." A corresponding passage in a previous Gospel, was that upon which Knox preached in the church of St. Andrew's. A painter has sketched this scene with great skill, and rendered the principal characters with great faithfulness. Knox preached in the cathedral or parish church of St. Andrew's, whilst the popish archbishops of Glasgow and St. Andrew's were present looking on. You will see in the picture a soldier with a musket in his hand, saying, while Knox was thundering from the pulpit to the archbishop, "Shall I shoot him?" and the archbishop, with more cunning than otherwise, said, "No;" and Knox, fearless in his Master's service, proclaimed those great truths which so shook the papacy throughout Scotland, that the rooks' nests were torn down, and the rooks have not ventured to come back again. Hence, while in England, in 1850, the pope created archbishops and bishops, he felt — and it shows he has more good sense than some give him credit for — that Scotland is not ripe for an aggression, and therefore he has not ventured to inflict it: so powerful is one master-spirit at the time he is wanted, and so lasting are the effects when God's house is thoroughly cleansed from impurity. And let me say to brethren of the sister Church of England — a Church signalized by the faithfulness of many of its ministers, by the high Protestantism of its Articles, — that if Cranmer and Latimer and Ridley had been permitted to do, not all that Knox did, but more than they were able, you would not have heard of baptismal regeneration, transubstantiation, and many of those notions that are now dragging Romanism in its worst and most pernicious forms into the very house of God; as if it were again to be made a den of thieves, instead of a sanctuary and a house of prayer for all people. We learn from all this, that the true way is not the way of expediency, but

the way of principle. Put out what is wrong, and do not ask if it be expedient: retain what is wrong in order to conciliate, and the result will be most disastrous. Truth and duty are always expedient; expediency is not always truth and duty.

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### CHAPTER III.

PROVIDENCE AND GRACE. — NICODEMUS. — REASON FOR COMING TO JESUS BY NIGHT. — WISDOM OF OUR LORD'S TEACHING. — BAPTISM. — REGENERATION. — SUDDEN CONVERSIONS. — EARTHLY THINGS AND HEAVENLY. — BRASS SERPENT. — GOD'S LOVE.

THE chapter I have read is so replete with doctrinal, practical, and comforting instruction, that it would take many hours to exhaust its meaning, or even to make it as plain as it should be ; and yet it needs not to be made plain — it is one of those beautiful chapters, those touching incidents, that need only to be read in order to be admired and understood, if not in all the length and breadth and full extent of its meaning. The conversation arose mainly from an incident. Very remarkable it is, as if to show how providence and grace are linked together ; the most precious truths in the four Gospels, and indeed in all the Epistles, were revealed, as the world would call it, accidentally, as we call it, incidentally, or from circumstances that occurred in the providence of God, and became the suggestive *nuclei*, or texts of very precious and very important discourses. On this occasion the incident was the arrival of a distinguished Pharisee, — at the head, probably, of the Sanhedrim, not improbably its president, — a man of great shrewdness, sagacity, and worldly wisdom, who, hearing of what Jesus was and said, resolved to go and make inquiry, or learn for himself. He said, likely, “I cannot go by day, — *i. e.* amid light, — for that would so humble a chief ruler of the Jews,

that I should soon be the scoff of the Sanhedrim ; and if it were to be heard that I, a chief Rabbi, went to seek instruction from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth, others might imitate my example. But on the other hand, I will not and I cannot be satisfied with second-hand testimony ; I will go in the secret and silent watches of the night, and I will try if I can ascertain who this Jesus is, what his mission is, and whether common report speaks true when it tells me that he is the promised Messiah, ‘ the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.’ ”

He therefore approaches Jesus, ever accessible, ever ready to solve a difficulty, or to explain a truth, at night ; and he says to him in language most respectful, “ Rabbi,” — that is, Sir, — “ we know that thou art a teacher come from God.” There is a great deal implied in this : it is as much as to say, “ We are not satisfied that thou art the Messiah, — that we cannot admit, — but we are satisfied of this, that thou art a teacher come from God.” The Jews never looked for the Messiah as a teacher : they looked for him as a king upon his throne, and the pious only for a high-priest and sacrifice for sins ; and therefore, when he said, “ We know that thou art a teacher,” he evidently said, “ We do not believe that thou art the Messiah, — that we cannot admit, — but we are quite satisfied that thou hast a divine mission, and art a teacher come from God. And the proof that thou art so is, that no man living can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” He argued most logically, — from the omnipotence that was in the miracles to the inspiration of the worker of them. We never can suppose that an omnipotent hand will hold up a falsehood, but that that must be true which God bows the heavens to make known among mankind. The reasoning of Nicodemus, therefore, was conclusive. Up to this point, if you will allow the expression, Nicodemus, if a Jew could ever be said to be so, was a Unitarian : he did not believe in

the Deity of Christ, but he believed that he was a divine teacher, in that the miracles that he did were done by God.

Now, then, hear what was Jesus' reply ; and in that reply let us learn how truly one said in another Gospel, "Never man spake like this man." He did not enter into a discussion on the evidences of Christianity, — on the weight, the value, the nature of miracles. Nicodemus intended to provoke a discussion on the evidences of Christianity, — that is, a fight outside of Christianity ; but our blessed Master would not allow the contest to be waged outside, he at once brought him inside, and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ;" as if he had said, "Nicodemus, it is not learning that you want, but life, — not to have, but to be ; it is not a new lesson, Nicodemus, that you need, but a new heart ; and until that mighty change has passed upon you, which makes all things new, if I proceed to discuss the credentials of Christianity, it will be productive of no saving and lasting good." Here is the great fact that we ought now to teach. It is important to discuss the evidence, it is important to give a reason for the truth and the faith that are in us ; but the great want in man's heart is life. It is not new churches that we want, but it is life in the old ones. The old ecclesiastical machinery is good enough ; it only wants good men to manage it. The best church in the universe, with dead men to manage it, will be of no value whatever ; and the most corrupt of churches, if not apostate, with holy living men to manage it, will prove as the ambassadress of God, and a benefactress to mankind. And therefore, most beautifully does our Lord begin at the beginning ; and instead of entering into a long discussion that Nicodemus suggested, he prostrated the Pharisee in the dust, and told him — the learned and accomplished Rabbi — that what he needed was not discussion, not learning, not evidence, but life, — a new heart, to be born again, or to be born from above, or the second time.

Nicodemus instantly took up the words of our Lord, and obviously he did so a little nettled or irritated, — “What! does he reply — the teacher — does he reply to me, a Rabbi, in that style? Does he knock me down in that off-hand way? Does he refuse to enter into this discussion, and, instead of that, does he tell me, a Rabbi, that except I be born again, I cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Why, the thing is ridiculous;” and with a spice and mixture of satire, and scorn, and irony, Nicodemus saith unto him, “How can a man be born when he is old?” — as I am, — evidently treating this truth as the Roman Catholics treat the text, “This is my body;” putting a carnal and literal construction upon it, instead of its just, moral, and spiritual meaning: so true is it that the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. Then, mark how Jesus replies; and here is a precedent for all controversialists. Instead of retorting irony for irony, scorn for scorn, satire for satire, — instead of being angry because the pupil had been angry, — he repeats, with greater solemnity, but with a quiet, that indicates where truth was, “Verily, I say unto thee” — a Rabbi, a chief Rabbi, the president of the Sanhedrim, — “I say even unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” How very beautiful, now, is that precedent! Whenever two parties fall out, the one that is most angry has evidently the argument that is most weak; wherever there is God’s truth, there is true quiet, self-possession, composure. Jesus, the Truth, therefore replied in the language of quiet, but suggestive and emphatic rebuke, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Now, many have tried to prove that here is an allusion to baptism. Very many think, — and I do not know that they are wrong, — that this means, “Except a man be born of

water, *even* of the Spirit," using *καὶ*, *and*, in the sense of *even*; just as it is said, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire," where it evidently means, "with the Holy Ghost, *even as with fire.*" So they have thought that the conjunction here does not mean *and*, but *even*. I see no difficulty, however, in rendering it, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit." Baptism is admission into the outer kingdom, regeneration is admission into the inner kingdom. Whenever a person believes the truth, by baptism he makes profession of the truth; and if one were to say he believed the truth, but, being unbaptized, refused to be baptized, that man would be either very much mistaken, or not prepared to carry out all that Christ commands, and profess before men what in his heart and conscience he believed. And therefore all that would be implied by taking this text in its strictest sense would be, "Except a man by outer baptism enter into the outer kingdom, and by regeneration of heart enter into the inner kingdom, he can never see heaven and happiness." Well, there is nothing heretical in that; although, on the other hand, it ought to be stated that Christian baptism was not instituted when this discourse was given: it was instituted at the close of our Lord's appearance upon earth, just previous to his ascension, after his resurrection from the dead, when he said, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them." The baptism of John, I admit, existed, and baptism as a ceremony among the Jews existed; and the allusion to water or cleansing here may be to those baptisms; as it cannot, except by anticipation, refer to Christian baptism. But in order to show what was the full purport of it, you will notice, that when Jesus repeats the words in the sixth verse, he does not use the word *water* again, — "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again;" where evidently to be born of the Spirit is the essential thing, and therefore is put



as its sequel, or as that which necessarily and naturally follows it.

No doubt Nicodemus was wondering at this; he was perplexed: Jesus therefore says to him, in the seventh verse, "Marvel not that I said unto thee." Why should you wonder at this? it is not so extraordinary. If you be a Jew, you ought to know that in Ezekiel and in Isaiah there are distinct allusions to God pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh; there are allusions to what is equivalent to being born again,—to have a new heart and a new spirit; and therefore why should you, a Rabbi, the chief of the Sanhedrim, marvel that I said to you, "Ye must be born again." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit;"—a text that, in my humble judgment, disproves the opinion of those who think that everybody should be able to say when, on what day, after what sermon, in what church or chapel he was born again, converted, or made a Christian. I have a strong conviction that there are scarcely such things as what are called sudden conversions. They seem so to us, but I do not believe they really are so. You know the cloud that bursts has been very long gathering; the harvest that is reaped has been some six months growing; when the cup is full, an additional drop makes it overflow, but it would require to be full before: so when a person is suddenly converted, as it is called, it seems to me it is in many cases only the crowning touch to a series of touches, the crowning act in a series of incidents; and that what seems to be instantaneous is generally the result of a long and a protracted process. So the wind blows where it lists, and you hear its sound, and therefore know that it is blowing, and feel its effects; but know not at what point it rises, or where it will stop, or whither it goeth: "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." You are to judge of your re-

generation, not by its chronology, but by its fruits; not by when it was, but by what it leads to, — “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

Then Nicodemus, evidently awed and impressed, for truth was gaining ground, said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus said, What! you that indulged in irony — you that said satirically, “Can a man be born when he is old?” — “Art thou a master in Israel,” — a teacher in Israel, — “and knowest not these things?” “Instead,” it conveys, “of indulging in irony upon my remarks, you ought rather to be humbled by a sense of your own ignorance.” And yet so beautifully, so charitably said; said with such exquisite grace and beauty, and yet force, that Nicodemus never could be offended, while he felt he was humbled; and, therefore, Jesus says to him, “If I have told you earthly things,” — if I have told you what must take place here, and ye believe not, what would be the use of my telling you of heavenly things? Many men say, “We cannot comprehend how there can be a triune Jehovah.” The answer to these persons is, If you cannot comprehend earthly things, how can you expect to comprehend this? Can you comprehend the mysteries in a blade of grass? Can you comprehend the connection between mind and matter, between soul and body? You cannot. Then, if you cannot comprehend the lower things, with which you come into daily contact, how can you expect to comprehend eternal things?

Jesus then resolves not to leave Nicodemus without another great lesson. Nicodemus was evidently converted; for it is remarkable enough, we find in this very Gospel proofs that Nicodemus had this sermon blessed to him, and became a true believer and follower of the Lamb. For it is said in the seventh chapter of this Gospel, that “Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)” — how very remarkable the allusion to his coming by night, — “Doth our law judge any man, before it

hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." It is quite plain that this sermon was blessed to him, and that he became a disciple from being an inquirer. Jesus therefore not only tells him that a new heart is necessary, as a prerequisite to heaven; but he tells him also the grand process by which the new heart can be had. It would seem from this discourse as if Nicodemus had probably added, "Blessed Master, I see that I must be born again; but oh! tell me how I can get this!" The answer is that beautiful one, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." What good news is here! If we never heard another text to the end of our lives, this is enough to tell us the way to heaven; and if you never forget that text, you will recollect what will be the most precious record in your memory. And how does it teach us? Just think of the incident: the Israelites were dying in the desert by a plague of serpents, inflicted on them for their sins; Moses, by God's command, put up a likeness of the living creature that stung them upon a pole, as that to which they were to look and get health. Jesus was made in the likeness, not in the guilt, of sinful flesh—was lifted on the cross, is now lifted on his throne, is now lifted in the preaching of the gospel. Whoever believes on Jesus has eternal life.

Now mark what the Israelite did. He was dying; Moses said to every dying Israelite, "Look up to that brass serpent, and you will instantly get health. I have no doubt there were metaphysical, quibbling, and factious Israelites in the desert, just as there are metaphysical, quibbling, and factious Englishmen and Scotchmen in the nineteenth century; and I have no doubt that some of them said, "Monstrous! look at a piece of brass, and be healed! Give us a

physician's prescription ; give us some grand antidote, some good medicine, — something that we can understand ; but the idea of looking at a piece of brass hoisted on a pole ! — the thing is absurd ; we will not do it." And they did not do it ; and they died. But I have no doubt that Moses said to others, " Well, I will not enter into a discussion about the merits of brass, or about the beauty of the pole, or about the excellence of the thing at all : but let me ask you to try it — make the experiment." And it came to pass, that whoever looked, instantly had bodily health. Well, so it is with Jesus. You say, How can Jesus be God ? how can his sacrifice be atoning ? how can our looking to him be eternal life ? My answer is, Just try it : lay the stress and trust of your hearts for the forgiveness of your sins, for a right to heaven, upon Jesus as your righteousness and your sacrifice ; and, justified by faith, you will have what is the evidence of healing, — peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the similitude is not mine ; it is a divine one ; Jesus himself has sketched the similitude. And you can easily conceive in the case of the Israelites that looked — some, I have no doubt, in the agony of death, so that they could scarcely look ; yet if one ray of light shot from that brass serpent into the blindest and the darkest eye, it was instant cure ; — so in the gospel strong faith has strong comfort, weak faith has little comfort ; but little faith has the same salvation that strong faith has ; for Jesus is not a greater Saviour to greater faith, but he is the same salvation to all that believe, whether weakly or strongly, whether with little faith, or with the faith that can remove mountains.

Then Nicodemus, I have no doubt, when he heard this wonderful truth, — an appeal to a fact in his own history, — said, " How wonderful is this ? How do you explain it ? " Jesus said, The only explanation of it is this : " God so loved " — what intensity of love is in that monosyllable *love* ! — " so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

In other words, God does not love us because Christ died for us; but Christ died for us because God loved us. How beautiful is this! — to think that the gospel is a provision of the Father's love for its reaching sinners. Who can fail to see in this text an emphatic Abrahamic allusion? "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son — his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." And therefore, it teaches the idea of atonement — that God gave Christ not as an example, but gave him as an atonement and sacrifice for the sins of all that believe.

## CHAPTER III. 36.

SUMMARY OF TRUTHS. — BAPTISM AND IMMERSION. — DISPUTES.  
— HUMILITY OF JOHN. — SEAL. — EVERLASTING LIFE. — LIFE  
THROUGH FAITH AND FROM CHRIST. — THE FUTURE NOT IN  
EITHER DIVISION. — INSENSIBILITY. — ONLY TWO CLASSES.

THE result of all the teaching in this chapter is expressed in the closing words. Jesus says, in solemn yet blessed accents, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John iii. 36. He tells us that "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world" — the gift of God in his distinguishing mercy, — "but that men loved darkness rather than light," for the obvious reason that their deeds could not bear the brightness of the light, for dark deeds must have a dark element in which to live. He then states, on the other hand, that "he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God;" and thus God have the glory of the deeds which the believer brings up to the light; that believer's light so shining about him, that others seeing his good works may glorify his Father who is in heaven.

It appears that after Jesus had concluded the discourse of which these are the last words, "John was baptizing in Ænon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized." In chap. iv. it is said, "Jesus baptized;" and it is added, "though Jesus baptized

not, but his disciples." We have in this an evidence of a common occurrence in the Scripture, where God is said to do things directly that he does only instrumentally. For instance, it is said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. He did not do so by the direct power of his omnipotence, but by means of the things that he did before him, which, failing to soften, necessarily resulted in the reactionary influence of hardening a heart that they could not soften. So Jesus is said to have baptized; but when we turn to the next chapter, at the beginning, we read, "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus baptized not, but his disciples)." He did by them what he is said in this verse to have done directly himself. I did not explain in the previous expository remarks on the chapter that the expression, "there was much water there," in verse 23, is not the literal rendering of the words. Our Baptist brethren allege that this is clearly proof that immersion was the exclusive practice of primitive baptism, for that John was baptizing because there was much water. But, in truth, it would seem to indicate the very reverse. The words in the original are *πολλὰ ἕδατα*, which means literally, "many waters;" or it might be rendered "many pools;" not pools so deep that a person could be immersed in them, but pools of water, and otherwise so abundant that John could easily have access to them, and the people be baptized.

We then read that, in the midst of all this, "there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying." Whenever men begin to feel the truth coming home to their consciences, they will try to make it leap off at a tangent, by starting some intricate metaphysical side dispute. Those solemn and instructive truths that were taught in this beautiful discourse, had evidently been productive of impression; the Jews, to stave off what might

disturb the conscience, and trouble it till it got possession of the true peace, originated a question or a controversy about purifying. Now, that explains many a controversy in the church. Whenever the Spirit of God is awakening any portion of the church into real life, Satan will get up a galvanic life, an apparent life, or an excitement about church government, or church formularies, or church ceremonials, or some other extrinsic and superficial subjects. The evidence of great disputes in a church about trifles, is evidence of deep impressions somewhere in the church of living realities. Men never begin to dispute about little things except there be some great movement that Satan tempts them thus to try to divert into another and an utterly profitless channel. They came to John, and tried to excite rivalry between him and Jesus; but John, like a true minister of the gospel, would not allow his shadow in the least degree to darken the glory of his blessed Master. And therefore John, with all humility, and with all the faithfulness of a true minister, says, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ." I never pretended to be able to regenerate; I only baptize with water, he baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. I never assumed to be he; I never pretended to step into his shoes; the distance between him, the Divine Master, and me, the humble herald, is impassable, it is infinite. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom;" the true Church is the bride, Christ the Bridegroom; "I am but the friend of the bridegroom," congratulating him on his success, and rejoicing. And the joy that I feel now is the joy that results from this:—that Christ is gathering from the midst of the world a company to himself, to present to himself a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing. Hence, the result is, "He must increase,"—increase in reign, increase in glory, increase in his heritage till all the earth is his,—



“but I must decrease.” The morning star retreats as the sun climbs to his meridian; the spring gives way as the summer treads upon its skirts; the seryant must give way when the master comes to take the place that is due to him alone.” “He that cometh from above is,” therefore, “above all,”—so is Christ,—“he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.” And then he says, now describing the true believer, “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.” You will observe how John, with consummate wisdom and Christian prudence, puts aside the dispute that they tried to originate, shuts his eyes to what they intended to make it,—a rivalry between him and Christ, and turns their thoughts instantly to what are the marks and characteristics of a true believer, and how and by what evidences that believer may be known. Now, the very first that he states is, “He that hath received his testimony” — that is, Christ’s testimony — “hath set to his seal that God is true.” Receiving Christ’s testimony, then, is the mark of a believer; not adding to it, not detracting from it, not receiving in its stead tradition, but Christ’s testimony; he hath set to his seal that God is true. And then he adds, “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” John says, Christ speaks the very words of God. He is the Word of God—the Word made flesh, the vehicle of God’s mind; so that he that hath seen him hath seen the Father. And then he concludes the chapter with the summary of all that distinguishes the church from the world, the believer from the unbeliever, the saint from the unconverted sinner:—“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.” Now, these words constitute a proclamation of infinite and inexhaustible value. It is one of those great truths that we should suppose men would hear like the

sound of a trumpet, awakening every thought, and hope, and anxiety within. What a proposition! what grandeur is in it, what sublimity! what intensity of interest is compressed into that single clause, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life." All that is transient, temporary, national, local, peculiar, is merged in the great proposition, "He" — whatever be his age, his clime, his country; Jew or Gentile, Greek or barbarian, bond or free — "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

## CHAPTER IV.

A SERMON. — NO ACCIDENTS. — WOMAN OF SAMARIA. — A PAGE IN HER HISTORY. — HER DESIRE TO KEEP IT SECRET. — HER RECOGNITION OF JESUS. — HER MISSIONARY CONDUCT. — SICK SON. — DISEASE NOT PECULIAR TO POVERTY. — THE CURE. — THE PROOF.

THIS chapter contains one of the most remarkable and, perhaps, impressive incidents recorded in the Gospels. It is the record or report of a sermon; Christ himself the preacher; and a lonely woman who had come to Jacob's well to draw water, the whole of his congregation. By this incident we are taught a very useful lesson even at the outset. It is not the multitude that hear that lends interest, and grandeur, and importance to the circumstances in which we are met. One soul thirsting for living water is a sufficient reason why the best, and ablest, and most gifted of preachers should proclaim to that soul the unsearchable riches of Christ. Nothing can be more puerile than the remark, "I have few to preach to, therefore I cannot preach fervently." If we are filled by the grandeur of the theme, by the solemnity of the circumstance, by the issues that are involved in it, what will be inspired into our thoughts before will be communicated to our words, and we shall preach to one just as if we preached to one thousand; knowing that no arithmetic of ours can calculate the value of one immortal soul.

It appears on this occasion that "Jesus must needs go

through Samaria ;” this was no accident, for by doing so he came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, “near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there.” Wearied with his journey, and hungry and thirsty, he sat down by the well side : it was a deep spring, a wall was built round it, probably of some two or three feet in height, and upon this stone wall Jesus sat down, exhausted and tired, — the Man of Sorrows, — and here, as everywhere, acquainted with grief. A woman came to draw water, and that woman was a Samaritan. The Samaritans held only the Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses, as inspired Scripture ; they did not accept the Prophets : they believed that on Mount Gerizim was the proper place for the temple, and not upon Mount Zion, as the Jews constitutionally and scripturally held it. This woman came to the well to draw water ; and seeing Jesus, and knowing by his accent that he was Jewish, — or by his dress, which was probably no less so, — when he asked her for a draught of water, the thing seemed so unusual that she said, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria ? We have no dealings together ; you know we Samaritans are Dissenters, you Jews are Churchmen ; you have excommunicated us, and we have retaliated and repaid you in your own coin, by excommunicating you ; and all intercourse between us has long ago ceased. And she said, partly in banter, partly in merriment, “How is it that you, a Jew, have so completely overstepped the barriers that separate us, that you inquire, contrary to all ecclesiastical etiquette, that you descend from the dignity of a high Churchman to ask a glass of water of me, who am a lowly and despised Dissenter ?” The answer that Jesus gave was a truly beautiful one : “Had you only known the intrinsic, and the eternal, and had your mind been less filled with the circumstantial and the transient, you would never have started a quarrel or recalled

such paltry and contemptible disputes as these;—if thou knewest the gift of God you would have asked of me, and you would have got something far better than Jewish pride or Samaritan hate, than Zion or Gerizim, than Church or Dissent—even living water.” Immediately she turned round to him, and showed that she had notions as high in her own way as the Jews had in theirs. “Art thou greater than our father Jacob?” This is what is called apostolical succession: a Churchman traces his ecclesiastical pedigree back to the Fathers; the Dissenter will trace his to John Howe, or to Baxter, or to some other great worthy; and it is quite possible to make as much of Baxter or of Howe in Nonconformity, of Knox or of Melville in the Scotch Church, as it is for the English ultra-Churchman to make of the Fathers and the writers of the first three centuries of the Christian era. The fact is, we are all prone to constitute somebody master, and to look up to some great spirit as the standard and test of all excellence. “Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us this well, and drank thereof himself,”—and consecrated it by doing so,—and not only he, “but his children and his cattle also?”

We are in possession of the very well that Jacob dug, the original well that he consecrated. There is no such well in the world as our well, or such water as ours, or such place as our country. Art thou greater than he?—whom makest thou thyself? “Jesus answered and said unto her,” with his wonted mildness, “Whosoever drinketh even of Jacob’s well shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.” And then the woman said, probably in banter, for she was evidently very witty, “Sir, give me this water, and then I shall not have the trouble of coming day by day to fill this heavy pitcher with water to satisfy my thirst. “Jesus saith unto her”—seeing that she was trying to make merry with what he had said, and seeing in her mind a great deal that was rather

without religion than contrary to religion, he resolves to touch a chord that should awaken conscience to its depths, and make her feel that there was something more than ecclesiastical etiquette that man's soul ought to think about; with that discernment of the human mind, with that acquaintance with human history, which none but the Son of God had, he says to her, breaking the thread of the discourse, and casting a live spark into her ignitable conscience, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said" — what was perfectly true — "I have no husband;" although it often happens that half a truth is a whole lie. It was quite true that she had no husband, but that was not a true, because not a complete statement of her circumstances. Then she thought she had finished all the objections; but what was to her the unexpected result? "Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband" — that is quite true; and then he explains to her a chapter in her biography which she thought was buried in oblivion, and was known only to herself. "Thou hast had five husbands in succession; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband" — thou art not married to him — "in that saidst thou truly;" but that expression had underlying it also the serious charge that she had concealed what she knew, and had not disclosed all the circumstances of her case. Then the woman, evidently startled, as she felt a strange and mysterious hand turning over the leaves of her memory, and casting pure light full upon every page, as he turned it over, touching the most sensitive part of her conscience, and awakening in her mind forebodings of death, of judgment, and eternity, instantly exclaimed, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." She denies nothing. She says, I see you know me as well as I know myself. Well, now, mark what she then says; — one would have thought she would have added instantly, "O tell me how this great sin can be forgiven, where this past of my life can be blotted

out. Show me that mysterious power that will cancel those dark pages which thou hast revealed in the light of truth ;” —one would have thought she would have said so. But human nature will shrink from the hand that meddles with its conscience ; and therefore she tried to divert his attention, and to vary the subject, and to turn into an ecclesiastical controversy about forms outside what was in dispute, as long as she could keep the dispute at a distance from her conscience. Therefore she says, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain ; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship ;” as much as to say, “Now, I do not want to hear more about that personal subject ; that does not suit me, it is unpleasant. I want to know more about consecrated places, about ecclesiastical forms,—any thing you like ; but do not touch my conscience, or remind me of my sins any more.” Jesus, knowing that the time would come when this suffering of the conscience should end in conversion of the soul, answers her ; as much as to say, “I will take you as I find you ; I will answer you ;” but still he lifts her heart above form and ceremony — “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we worship : for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Ransack all heathendom ; read the beautiful Dialogues of Plato ; read the noblest monuments of Greek or Roman learning ; and in the highest elevation that their philosophers reached, you will find no sentiment approaching within a thousand miles of the magnificent announcement — “God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” As much as to say, “It is not the form in which,

or the place where, you worship, but the spirit that is in it." You may worship without a form and yet worship most spiritually, or you may worship with a form and yet worship spiritually. The true worship is not a thing of liturgy or extemporaneous prayer, but far deeper, — it is a thing of the innermost soul. If there be the worship of the soul, God forgives or overlooks the imperfections of the form. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The woman then made another remark, thinking she had got him off the ground she did not wish him to tread, — "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things." Then Jesus at once said to her, "I that speak unto thee am he." We discover from the rest of this chapter the woman never forgot the searching inquisition that he instituted in her conscience. It made an indelible impression. She then left her waterpot — that is, the pitcher with which she came to draw water — and she went her way into the city, and did what few females of modern times would have the courage to do, but a courage that in her case became her, and was her credit and her glory, — "she saith unto the men, Come, see a man" — now, mark how his examination of her conscience had left its impression upon it — "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" He has shown omniscience, acquaintance with my innermost soul, intimacy with the deepest secrets of my biography — is not this the Messiah promised to the fathers? "Then they went out of the city, and came unto him."

In the mean while, now, an incident took place parenthetically introduced. His disciples came to him, and said, "Master, eat. But he saith unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent



me, and to finish his work." The disciples attached to it a carnal meaning; just as the Jews in the sixth chapter attached to the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" and as the Roman Catholics attach to these words a carnal meaning, and construct the monstrous dogma of transubstantiation from them, the disciples here attached to the words a carnal and material sense. The constant course of Christ the Teacher, in the New Testament, is to raise men from the material to the moral, the spiritual, the heavenly: the constant tendency of man, the pupil, is to drag down the moral, the spiritual and the heavenly within the limits of the carnal, the material and the earthly. He then tells them the harvest of the world is ready, souls need to be gathered, and that now it became him to seize the opportunities as they evolved, and to lead men to the knowledge of the way of heaven, of happiness, and of glory. The harvest is ready, the laborers are few.

After this parenthetical incident, many of the Samaritans, that is, the countrymen of the woman of Samaria, and to whom she had acted as a faithful missionary, came to him and believed on him for the saying of the woman. "So when they were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word." And then is stated, what is so true, "They said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." You see, therefore, how useful a missionary a woman may be. She may not go and preach the Gospel, — she may not stand upon the streets and proclaim it; but she may by a thousand channels, — and having access where man cannot, she may drop a hint in conversation, she may give an advice to an acquaintance, she may say a word to a stranger, not that will explain to them

the Gospel, but that will bring them to hear some faithful preacher of everlasting truth ; and hearing that preacher, they will thank the instrument that brought them within the sound of the truth, and may be brought to believe, not because of that woman's word, but because they have heard themselves the things that belong to their everlasting peace.

After this we read that " Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine," — that miracle being again alluded to as a very remarkable one, and also his first ; " and there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum." Disease is not the monopoly of the poor ; it visits the halls of the rich as well as the hovels of the humble. A nobleman's son was not exempt from the common ills and evils of humanity ; he was sick. This nobleman, however, had grace to come to Jesus, and beseech him that he would come down and heal his son. " Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." But the nobleman's love for his child and sympathy with his sufferings was too intense to be repelled by what seemed a repulse ; and he therefore said, " Sir, come down ere my child die. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth." You will recollect the centurion came to Jesus and said, " Speak the word, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus then went to the centurion's home and healed the sick person. In this instance the nobleman asks him not to speak the word, but to come down ; and Jesus does not come down, but speaks the word. Now, when the centurion said, " Speak the word, and my servant shall be healed," he so honored the Lord Jesus, that he condescended to do more than he asked — he went down to his house and healed him. In this instance the nobleman expected that Jesus would come down to his house, and go to a distance, not honoring him as the centurion had done, and while Jesus did not refuse his prayer, he did not answer it

with that rich liberality with which he answered the prayer of the centurion. The nobleman, then, in returning to his home, was met by his servants, who told him, "Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth."

How beautiful the chapter we have read! What an impressive lesson respecting us all! What a truthful view of human nature! How evident that this is reality! How plain that the evangelist did not invent a tale, but sketched and copied from a living original!

## CHAPTER IV. 13, 14.

SCRIPTURE INCIDENTS. — NO CHANCE. — THE PREACHER HERE. —  
UNEXPECTED GIFTS. — ALL OF GOD. — EXPULSIVE POWER OF A  
NEW AFFECTION. — LIVING WATER. — MISTAKES.

ONE of the most remarkable passages of Scripture is the following : “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John iv. 13, 14.

Thus we see how incidental things occurring in the providential history of man are made the texts and the nuclei from which Christ originates most precious moral and spiritual instruction. One could scarcely have believed that the incidental circumstance of a woman coming to draw water from a well, on the margin of which the Saviour rested, could have led to so instructive a lesson on the one hand, or been followed, as in the case of her countrymen of Samaria, with so many happy and so blessed results on the other. That woman went that day to draw water from Jacob’s well, carrying her pitcher on her head, as she had done many a day before. That day seemed to her just like the rest ; yet if she had omitted it, if any thing had occurred to make her go there an hour later or an hour earlier, probably, humanly speaking, her whole destiny had been changed, the current or conversion of multitudes in Sa-

maria arrested, and the aspect of centuries altered by the incidental occurrence. The truth is, there was no accident in her going at that hour ; there was no accident in Jesus resting on the well at that hour : the accidents of men are the missionaries of God, and what man calls the event of chance is a link in the chain that lifts a world into communion and fellowship with God. Accident is not a Christian name. Chance occurs in the Bible, but not as a God, nor yet as an inspiration from him ; and both words, in the popular acceptance of them, should be banished from a Christian's vocabulary. Show me that there is accident in the humblest and most apparently insignificant fact that you can mention, and I will answer, and logically prove, that there is accident in a monarch's accession, or in a monarch's fall ; and if I can prove these two, I will make the just and equally logical deduction, there is no God to govern the world, but a world left to itself, to make the best of its way home, and to miss its destiny or to make its voyage as accident and chance may regulate or restrain. The truth is, if any Christian would be at the trouble to trace back his past history, he will find that the whole complexion, and tone, and relationship of his present position is the result of what the world calls very trifling accidents. It was the merest turning of a corner that brought you to that place of worship ; it was the merest accidental interview at a party that has made you the husband of that wife, the wife of that husband ; it was the merest circumstance that led you into that position where you can now command, in which once you were constrained to obey. Review your own biography, and you will not need many arguments to convince you that there is a God. Read your own history, and you will not long feel that there are any accidents. If there be accidents in small things, there must be chance in mighty things ; for minute incidents are the pivots on which reformations, revolutions, and the whole condition and history of

the world constantly turn. The fact is, that if I had the whole of the cycle of the last fifty years before me before it began to run, and the power of putting in a pin at any part of the last fifty years, the history of the world would be revolutionized ; so completely do gigantic issues depend and hang upon minute and incidental facts. There is no chance ; God orders, God governs ; and it was as fixed in the past arrangements of Heaven that that woman should come to Jacob's well, as it was fixed that the Messiah should be born, that he should be nailed to the cross, and that thousands upon thousands should be saved by his precious blood. Free as man feels, responsible as he is, yet I believe that all in our lot that is gone is so fixed that it could not be otherwise. I am immortal till my work is done ; till that work assigned to me is finished no spear-point can touch me, no power can harm me ; I am invulnerable till I finish the mission that God has intrusted to my care. And yet, true as this is, most true as it is, it does not prevent my acting from motives on common sense, and after precedents, and using vigorously all the means that God has placed in my power ; knowing that the means, or the apparent things, are mine ; that the decree, or the hidden thing, is God's.

Mark here the preacher of this wonderful sermon, Jesus, the Son of God, weary, hungry, thirsty, seated upon the well of Samaria. How clearly was Christ man ! We can go with the Unitarian here in every thing, and say that Christ is man. We have no doubt that he is man. We only object to the Unitarian's refusing to turn over the page of his Bible, and read upon the obverse side he is also God. All that can be predicated of God can be said of Jesus ; all that can be predicated of man can also be said of him. Then here he was, the Creator of heaven and of earth, weary, exhausted, seeking rest : here he is, — He that opened all the springs and channels of the earth, that

placed the ocean in his oozy bed, that controls the waves, and sends his showers to refresh the moor,—here he is, seated by the side of Jacob's well, asking a stranger woman from Samaria, "Give me to drink!" How true, "though rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich!"

We learn another lesson. Persons often come seeking an earthly object, and unexpectedly they retire with a heavenly one. This woman came to draw water from Jacob's well, and she drinks, ere she goes, from the fountain of Jacob's God. This woman came seeking a supply for her household; unexpectedly to her she went away with a supply of living water for thousands of the men of Samaria. Some come to church to scoff, and they retire to pray; some come to hear a human preacher, and unexpectedly they hear the preacher's God. Some come seeking water from the cisterns of time, and they go away, unexpectedly to themselves,—and it will not be the least part of their songs of gratitude throughout eternity,—refreshed with water from the fountain of living waters. I have noticed the carping words of the woman,—“How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?” I have noticed the miserable ecclesiastical prejudice that subsisted in sects then, and, strange to say, amid the light of the nineteenth century, subsists amidst the Church still; though one feels that, like snow after a thaw, it is only found in patches here and there, where the Sun of Righteousness has not yet penetrated. Jesus instantly tells her, what was far more precious than the settlement of an ecclesiastical dispute, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” “If thou knewest the gift of God.” Who is that gift of God? All things are gifts of God: one is *the* gift of God. Hence the Apostle Paul says, “Thanks be

to God for his unspeakable gift." There is not a flower that blooms in the garden, or that wafts its sweetness on the desert air, that his breath did not give fragrance to, and his hand give tints to ; there is not a star in the sky that he did not make ; there is nothing so exquisitely minute that his fingers did not form ; there is nothing so magnificently great that his power did not make it. The first showers of spring, the storms of winter, the sunshine of summer, are all God's gifts. There is not a crumb on our table that is not his gift : and if you had eyes to see, and knew his gift, you would see upon the bread that is on your table the stamp and superscription of him that was nailed to the cross for us. But above all earthly, providential, and temporal gifts, there is one that is *the* gift ; and " if thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldst have asked of him." " God so loved the world, that he gave " — that is, he made the gift of — " that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." And then he tells her, " If thou knewest, thou wouldst have asked." Does not that teach us that prayer must be preceded by knowledge ? " If thou knewest the gift, thou wouldst have asked of him." If you knew what you are, what God has done for you, your lips would not be dumb, and your hearts would not be prayerless. And then he adds very beautifully, " Thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee," — implying that as sure as the empty creature asks, so sure the full God will abundantly give, — " and he would have given you living water to drink." He contrasts the water contained in the well of Jacob with that living water that he had to bestow.

Now, how does our Lord lift this woman above earthly things ? He brings a higher and a better thing into juxtaposition with the inferior thing. If you want a person to rise above the love, the idolatrous love, of things that are seen, you will never lead him to do so by preaching against



those things. If you find a man devoted to money, and the love of money, — the most grovelling and contemptible passion upon earth, infinitely worse than the spendthrift's or the prodigal's, — if you want a man to give up the wretched feeling of the miser, you may preach from morning to night against the love of money — he will not do it. If you say, why? it is his all, he does not know of any thing better. No man can live without a God to worship; and a man that knows not the living God will have an idol; and passion, if not a pure and a lofty one, will be a debased and a grovelling one. But love and hate you must; worship and adore you ever will.

The miser, then, knows nothing else. And what do you do when you bid him give up the love of money? You bid him quench the only light that burns in his home; you bid him extinguish the only embers that are in his grate; you bid him despoil himself of that which is his only enjoyment upon earth. And he will tell you, "It cannot be; my soul cannot be empty; I must have something to think about, something to love, something to pursue; and if I have it not, self-destruction will be the inevitable issue." Then what are you to do? Try to dislodge his love of earthly objects by showing him the virtue, the attraction, the glory of heavenly things. It is a great law, that a lesser light can be quenched only in a larger light. The sunshine will put out the fire that burns in your grate; the love of a nobler thing will absorb and destroy the love of an inferior thing; and, therefore, the only way to make the miser give up the excessive love of gold, that is his all, is so to unfold to him the hopes, the joys, the blessings, the privileges, the worthiness, the excellence of the things that relate to his everlasting peace, that he will be so charmed with the love of the higher, that he will instantly or ultimately let go his grasp of the lower and the more grovelling. If I met a Roman Catholic, and wished to show him

the errors of his religion, I would not first attack the worship of the Virgin Mary, or the pope's infallibility. He would say, "That is my religion; why should you attack it? Why should you deprive me of it? If once I let it go, what have I to fall back upon?" And he is quite right. No man should give up the religion that he has, unless he knows of something brighter and better. Do not quench the tiny glowworm, unless you can bring the big bright sun. Do not take away the consecrated and holy water, unless you can bring the great fountain of living water to supply its place. Do not disparage Jacob's well, unless you can bring her that drinks from it to Jacob's God. And therefore, in dealing with the victim of error, show him the falsehood of the tenets that he holds; but, co-extensive with the exhibition of his error, show him the greater beauty, attraction, and excellence of the truths that he knows not. And, in the same manner, if I were to go into a company of gamblers at a race-course, and be asked to preach there, I should not first of all think of preaching against horse-racing; I should only bring scoffers about me, and do no good. If I were to preach to the most dissipated, depraved, and dissolute set of men in England, I should not think at first of preaching against their balls, their drinking, their gambling; but I would try to awaken in the conscience thoughts about the future, thoughts about a God; I should tell them what God's love is, what God's law is, what the Gospel is; and that would enable me by and by to contrast that they love with that of which they have hitherto been ignorant.

The true way, therefore, to deal with man is not so much to attack Jacob's well, but to try and bring into comparison with Jacob's well the fountain of living waters of Jacob's God. And therefore our blessed Master, with that infinite wisdom which he always displayed, said, "If thou knewest, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given

thee living water." And then he utters this magnificent maxim, "Whosoever drinketh of this water of Jacob's well shall thirst again." As if he said, "I do not condemn it — I do not condemn your well; but I tell you this, what you yourself well know, that you will always thirst after drinking it, and have to drink again." "But whosoever drinketh of the water" — there is the contrast — "that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." I need not say that all this is figurative. And here you will notice an instance of the nature of our Lord's teaching. He speaks in the sixth chapter of this Gospel, which, if spared, we shall soon read, of bread; and then he goes on, from the bread that perisheth, to speak of the doctrine of the Cross, the blessings of the Gospel, the meat of everlasting life. So he speaks here to the woman, of the water in the patriarch's well; and he passes on, by a natural and beautiful transition, to speak of the living water, or the privileges, the blessings, the joys, and the hopes of the Gospel of the kingdom. He says, of all the water in all the wells of the world, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." We fancy that if we can drink of that well we shall never thirst; or, translated into common language, we fancy if we had only five hundred a year, how happy we should be! if we had only a thousand a year, how happy we should be! And we find, when God has been pleased to grant the realization of such a wish, that we still thirst after we have drunk what we so ardently desired. The servant thinks within himself, "If I were only a master, how happy I should be!" and then, when he becomes a master, he finds that the thirst is not quenched. He then begins to think, "Oh! if I only had so many hundred a year, how happy I should be!" He obtains the so many hundred a year; and then he says, "Oh! if I could only get a title, and be made a baronet or a peer, how happy I

should be!" He gets his title, but the thirst still remains. He then begins to think, "If I were only to be made a prince, how happy I should be!" And he is made a prince, and like a prince in ancient history, he cries in agony from a throne, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest forever." So true is it, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."

But, on the other hand, it is true, equally and blessedly true — "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." That is to say, such is the nature of true religion, that you find satisfaction and want, like sound and echo, like light and shadow, the one instantly following upon the other. There will be wants in heaven, but wants no sooner felt than met; there will be desires of endless progression in the realms of glory, but the very desiring will be joy, and the desire will no sooner be felt than it will be removed. But this great truth — that in the knowledge of God, and of everlasting life revealed in the Gospel, alone there is rest — is like one of those inscriptions written upon the stones in the pavement of vast cathedrals, over which the feet of busy traffic continually go, and by which letter after letter is gradually erased, till the multitudes read it no more. But it is the preacher's duty, like him in the ancient story — despised it may be, and condemned — to take humbly and laboriously the chisel, and cut out letter after letter, till at length he that reads may run while he reads, "He that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but it shall be in him a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life." In other words, translated into popular and modern language: There is no satisfaction that will meet the demands of the soul in the possession of wealth, of honor, of dignity, of rank, of learning; there is only repose for the weary spirit, and satisfaction for the exhausted heart, in that trust, in those hopes, in the knowledge, the love, the

life of the everlasting Gospel of the Son of God. It is the evidence that man's soul is fallen, that it seeks satisfaction from Jacob's well; it is the evidence of its aboriginal magnificence, that all the Jacob's wells in the world cannot remove its thirst. Because man seeks satisfaction upon earth, he gives proof that he is a fallen being; because he can never find what will satisfy him upon earth, he gives proof that he is in his origin a great and a magnificent being. And that conviction is the prophecy, that in the fulness of the time that soul will be satisfied with the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Notice, in the next place, how our Lord sets forth the Gospel; not as a pool that evaporates in the sun, and disappears; not as a cistern whose waters soon ooze out, and leave but mud and decaying vegetation behind; not as a fountain that once gushed up, but has ceased to well forth its waters; but a living spring that leaps from the rock, and refreshes the weary, the thirsty, and the heavy laden in their journeys. A religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. Water, it is said, rises to the level from which it originally came; religion rises to the level from which it came. A religion that will lead you to God, must be a religion that came from God. And wherever there is this real religion—where there is this drinking, not from Jacob's well, but from the well of Jacob's God—there will not only be refreshment to your own soul, but there will be within you a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life. Every Christian is likened to a fountain; and just as the fountains of the earth well up their water by the pressure of the ocean that surrounds the globe, so every fountain of living water will be more than refreshed himself; he will spring up and refresh others that are around him—the Christian becoming a missionary, and the greatest receiver becoming the greatest giver.

Have you drunk of this living water? “Ho, every one

that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; he that hath no money, come, buy wine and milk." "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." It is the most solemn responsibility of all that read these words, that there is all heaven and everlasting glory to be had for asking; and it will be the terrible condemnation of thousands, that they have heard tidings that ought to electrify the dead, and yet have neglected this great salvation. I ask all that are restless and troubled in mind — all that are building castles in the air, and hoping that they will be a shelter from the storm — all that are accumulating wealth, and thinking that will reflect upon them smiles, and satisfaction, and joy, not to build upon these things; but to seek that knowledge, that truth, that new heart, that peace with God through the blood of sprinkling, which is the intensest happiness that can be tasted upon earth, and the sure and certain joy that remains for the people of God. I do not ask you to give up all that is in the world. I know many preachers err by fulminating against every thing that is in this world, as if it were wicked. It is not wrong to love money; it is only wrong to love it to excess. But money itself is good; it buys books, it buys learning; and to love money is to love books and learning, and many means of usefulness and of doing good. It is fanaticism to bid you not love money; it is proper to love it; but it is sinful beyond expression to love money equal to God, or to make the love of money absorb the love and the allegiance that you owe to God. It is quite right to love literature; it is right to study science; it is your duty to be merchants, to be tradesmen, to be senators, to be physicians, to be lawyers; and if you do not give a very large share of your attention and your thoughts to your profession, you will soon be left behind in the march of life. You must labor. "If a man will not work, neither

should he eat." Monks, and nuns, and anchorites, are not Christians; they go out of the world mechanically, fancying, in their folly, they go out of it morally: whereas the world is in the heart; and whether you ascend to the loftiest mountain crag, or descend to the deepest coal-pit, the world is in you, and you will be in the world. What we need is not a mechanical change of place, but a moral transformation of the heart; and by having that, then we shall seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all other things we shall lay each in its proper place, see it in its just proportions; and set our affections supremely upon things that are heavenly, and relatively and subordinately upon things that are earthly. We shall love, chiefest of all, the fountain of living waters, and in its own place we shall be thankful for, and drink with gratitude and praise from, Jacob's well.

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NOTE — [5.] Sychar is better known by the O. T. name of Sichem (*Συχῆμ*), or τὰ Σίκιμα (Josephus, Euseb. etc.), or ἡ Σίκιμα (LXX., 1 Kings xii. 25). It was a very old town on the range of Mount Ephraim in a narrow valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (Judges ix. 7). The name Sychar has been variously derived from שָׁחַר a lie, or שָׂכַר drunken (Is. xxviii. 1), by some (Reland, Lightfoot), who believe it to have originally been an opprobrious name given by the Jews, but by this time to have lost its signification, and become the usual appellation: by others from *Συχῆμ*, by mere corruption of the terminating liquid *μ* into *ρ* (Olsh.). Very near it was afterwards built Flavia Neapolis. There is a long and interesting history of Sichem and the Samaritan worship on Gerizim, and the Christian church in the neighborhood, in Robinson's Palestine, iii. 113, τοῦ χωρ. ὁ ἔδωκ.

The important words "the gift of God" have been misunderstood by many commentators. Some suppose them to mean "our Lord himself," and to be in apposition with the next clause — καὶ τίς ἐστίν κ. τ. λ. Others, "this opportunity of speaking with me." Doubtless both these meanings are involved, especially the former; but neither of them is the primary one as addressed to the woman. The water is, in this first part of the discourse, the subject, and serves as a point of

connection, whereby the woman's thoughts may be elevated and her desire aroused. The process of the discourse, in this particular, is similar to that in Acts xiv. 17. From recognizing this water as the gift of God, in its limitation, verse 13, and its parabolic import, verse 14, her view is directed to him who was speaking with her, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. See ch. vii. 37-39. [*τίς ἐστίν.*] These pregnant words form the second step in the Lord's declaration. He who speaks with thee is no ordinary *Ἰουδαῖος*, nor any ordinary man, but One who can give thee the gift of God — one sent from God, and God himself.

Mount Gerizim: on this once stood the national temple of the Samaritan race. In Nehemiah xiii. 28, we read that the grandson of the high-priest Eliashib was banished by Nehemiah, because he was son-in-law to Sanballat, who not only received, but (Joseph. Ant. xi. 8 2-4) made him high-priest of a temple which he built on Mount Gerizim. Josephus makes this appointment sanctioned by Alexander when at Tyre; but the chronology is certainly not accurate, for between Sanballat and Alexander is a difference of nearly a century.

This temple was destroyed 200 years after by John Hyrcanus, (B. C. 129), see Joseph. Ant. xiii. 9. 1; but the Samaritans still used it as a place of prayer and sacrifice, and to this day the few Samaritans resident in Naplus (Sichem) call it the holy mountain, and turn their faces to it in prayer. They defended their practice by Dent. xxvii. 4, where our reading and the Heb. and LXX. is Ebal, but that of the Samaritan Pentateuch, Garizim (probably an alteration): also by Gen. xii. 6, 7; xiii. 4; xxxiii. 18, 20; Deut. xi. 26. "Our fathers" most likely means, not the patriarchs, but the ancestors of the then Samaritans. — *Alford.*



## CHAPTER V.

BETHESDA. — ALLEGED INTERPOLATION. — THE PARALYTIC. — STRENGTH AND GRACE. — THE SABBATH. — THANKFULNESS. — SIN AND SUFFERING. — PERSECUTION. — THE FATHER'S SABBATH WORK. — JESUS ASSERTS HIS DEITY. — GIVER OF LIFE. — SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

It does not seem to be settled by any parallel passage, what feast it was on the occasion of which Jesus went up from another part of Palestine to the capital, Jerusalem. An incident, however, is recorded on his arrival at the metropolis of his country, at a place called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, or "the house of mercy," around which were five sheds or porches, for the shelter of the sick or the invalids that came to be benefited by its waters, where lay a great multitude "of impotent" — or, as we should call it, paralytic — "folk, blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water." It is stated that an angel, at a certain season, went in and stirred the water, and then whoever stepped in first was healed. It is not probably meant here that this was the actual historical fact, but it is recorded as the impression or belief of the people at the time in which this was written. Some have supposed that the 4th verse, because it is wanting in some ancient manuscripts, was originally a note upon the margin, and has been introduced into the body of the text itself. I state this, not to lead you to suppose that there are other interpolations not noticed, but to show that so strictly has every text, and passage, and clause of this blessed Book been criticized, sifted, investigated, that the least apparent deviation has been noticed; and where a text has been omitted

in one manuscript, even if found in all besides, it has been noted by acute and impartial critics, who have devoted their minds to the examination of this blessed Book. The most ancient manuscript that we have is one in the British Museum, written about the fourth century—it has the text; the next most ancient manuscript is that in the Vatican Library at Rome; subsequent to these are many other manuscripts of the New Testament. I have already observed, that suppose at this moment every manuscript of the New Testament in existence were burned, and not one left, we could take the writers of the first four centuries of the Christian Church, beginning with Justin Martyr, and ending with Jerome and Augustine, and we could collect from their writings almost all the texts contained in the New Testament. So that, suppose there were no manuscript, contemporaneous writers have quoted almost every text. Augustine has a commentary upon almost every book. We find that the very contentions and disputes that harassed the visible Church, in the first three centuries of the Christian era, were actually overruled to the maintenance of the purity of the texts of the Bible; so that what we find in manuscripts, we can compare with what we find in the pages of controversial writers, and see that nothing has been altered from the earliest day even until now. The usual explanation is, that the pool actually received, by the special descent of the angel, healing or sanitary virtues; and that crowds went to it, and collected round it for that purpose. The main reason for introducing this, however, is to bring out an incident of very great value.

A certain man was there, who was a paralytic—for that is the meaning of his infirmity—thirty and eight years. Jesus was near Bethesda; he saw him, and he put the question to him, “Wilt thou be made whole?”—not as if there could be any doubt about the man’s will, but in order to awaken the man’s feelings, and to make him think of the

possibility of his being made whole. "The impotent man answered;" — thinking there was no virtue beyond the pool of Bethesda, just as some people think there is no spiritual instruction beyond the ordinance, the rite, or the sacrament, and forget that God may work against means or above means, — this man, thinking that except by Bethesda there could be no healing, stated his difficulty. He says, "I am so paralytic, that when the water is troubled, according to the angel's descent once a year, I have no man that will take compassion upon me, and put me into the water, that I may be made whole." "Jesus instantly saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed" — which was a sort of stool or chair that could be folded — "take up thy bed, and walk." The man might have said, "How absurd to make such an address to me! Why, I have not walked for eight-and-thirty years: how can I be expected to get up and walk now?" But he had the good sense to do just as he was bid, and strength came while he was doing, or seeking to do, what Christ commanded him. Now, here is the answer to many people who say, "How can I be a Christian? how can I believe? You admit that grace is a divine thing, and its gifts sovereign." I admit it all; but He that says to you, "Rise, go forth, and do the duty that devolves upon you," will give you strength to do it; not whilst you are like metaphysicians or theologians in a synod, discussing knotty and difficult problems; but whilst you rise up and walk, and attempt to do his bidding. "Immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked; and on the same day was the Sabbath. The Jews, therefore, said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed." They had stretched the obligations of the Sabbath beyond their proper extent. Whenever men push an ordinance beyond its proper limits, they injure the ordinance; and it is still quite possible to take so Judaic a view of the Sabbath as

to injure the claims and the sacredness of that day. The Christian Sabbath is not the Jewish one — to be mechanically observed, to be rigidly and laboriously regarded, as if we were made for the Sabbath, instead of the Sabbath being made for us : but it is the Lord's day ; and the spirit of the day, not the letter of its ancient ritual obligation, is what we should attend to. But these Pharisees had stretched the obligations of the day beyond their legitimate extent, and said it was sin even to carry a stick, or to carry any thing upon the Sabbath day. But the man gave them the best answer that he could have given. He said, "I cannot discuss this difficult question with you ; I am not disposed to enter into a controversy with you as to the extent of the obligations of the Sabbath ; but this I do know, that he that had power to make me whole, and restore health by a word, gave me the command, 'Take up thy bed and walk.'" And his argument was an irresistible one. He that had power to do such a miracle, you may depend upon it, had power either to dissolve the Sabbath, if it seemed good, or to do away with the obligations of the Sabbath ; for he must be the Lord of the Sabbath. Well, then, they asked him, "What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed and walk?" — just as if they did not know. They knew perfectly well ; it was only the inherent carping and cavilling of the Pharisees that made them ask a question to which their own minds could give an answer. But "he that was healed wist not who it was ; for Jesus had conveyed himself away."

Then after this "Jesus findeth him" — and this showed the true character and excellence of the man — just where mercies received should carry us — in the outward temple of God, there to thank and bless him. Jesus did not say to him, "Go to the temple, and return thanks ;" but the man's heart said to him, what Jesus approved in him, "Go and render thanks for the great benefits that you have received."

And when Jesus saw him, he said — “Behold, thou art made whole” — that you well know — “sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” Now, there underlies this intimation a very great truth — that sin and suffering are some way connected the one with the other. “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” We may trace all the ills and aches that flesh is heir to, to sin. Jesus knew the reason why that man was paralytic; he knew, probably, the sin that brought down that judgment. We cannot pronounce like Jesus; we must not conclude that the greatest sufferer is the greatest sinner. We must not always attempt to connect suffering, whether it be individual or national, with special individual or national sin. Jesus himself has given us a warning, when he says, “Think ye that those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all men? I tell you, Nay,” — instead of judging of the deserts of others, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” This last is our course. Jesus can trace the calamity to its source — the peculiar suffering to its specific sin; we cannot. Our business is never to pronounce, but always to pray. Where we see the greatest suffering, there is reason for our pity, our compassion, and our prayers; but there is no call for us, poor, blind, erring, fallible men, to pronounce a connection which we cannot trace, and of which we are not competent judges.

After this we read that the Jews, when they found Jesus, sought to slay him. For what? “Because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.” What horrid perversion of an ordinance of God was here! It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day. You ought to visit the sick, you ought to compassionate the suffering; if you see a brother suffer, you should help him; if you see your neighbor’s ox fall into a ditch, you should try to extricate it. It is always lawful to do that which is good on the Sabbath day, whilst it is not lawful to turn that day to purposes which are alike

unnecessary, unprofitable, and purely secular. They sought to kill him: such was their zeal for a crotchet, that they would perpetrate murder to vindicate it. How like the Church of the middle ages! how like the principles of that Church still! they put to death a heretic, because of what they call heresy. And, strange enough, whenever a Church or a body of men gets this spirit into it (and persecution, alas! has not been the monopoly of the Church of Rome), it will connive at the transgression of a moral law, and will murder you for the transgression of an ecclesiastical whim. Man is so enamoured of his tradition, that he will not suffer you to trample upon it; but he gets so careless of God's law, that he does not mind your trespassing there. How magnificent was the reply of Jesus! He says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Now, the meaning of that does not strike at first; but yet it is extremely beautiful; it might be the text for more than one discourse. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "You blame me for working. What has been my work? The healing of a poor, impotent, paralytic man. Well, in having done so, I have not done what is contrary to the laws of nature, but I have done what is in full consonance with those laws; for my Father worketh hitherto." There is not an ounce of sap rising from the roots, to burst into bloom and blossom, that is not rising by the immediate attraction or act of God. There is not a flower that blooms in the field, there is not a blade of grass that grows, there is not a star that moves in its orbit, there is not a ray of light that travels as a missionary from it to our world, there is not a heart that beats, there are not lungs that breathe, that are not all responding to the touch of my Father. God carries on his work on the Sunday as he does upon the Saturday. If God were to withdraw his power upon Sunday, all creation would stand still, or fall to pieces and become chaos again. God, therefore, works upon the Sunday; he maintains nature. The

grass grows upon Sunday as well as upon Saturday; the bees hum, and the birds sing, upon Sunday as well as upon Saturday; the flowers bloom upon Sunday as well as upon Saturday; the earth travels on its journey upon Sunday just as upon Saturday.

If God is doing all these things upon Sunday, because necessary, benevolent, and beneficent, am I not working in perfect harmony with my Father, when I bring back to his normal and right state a man whom sin and suffering have so degraded? How instructive the reply! "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Now the Jews, like all fierce ecclesiastics still, when they cannot get one excuse for putting a heretic to death, will find out another. As they had lost the excuse for putting him to death for violating the Sabbath, his answer having completely extinguished their objection, and made them ashamed of themselves, they invented another; and they said, Well, let us leave the first, but here is another, — "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." He did do so. The expression, that "God was his Father," is very remarkable. It is not *πατέρα αὐτοῦ*, the genitive of the pronoun, but it is *ἰδίων πατέρα*, "because he said that God was his Father" — in that peculiar sense in which he is the Father of nobody else. All will admit the Jews understood their own language; and they construed Jesus' language to involve the claims and prerogatives of God. But did Jesus instantly shrink from their construction? If, when they supposed he had been guilty of blasphemy by assuming divinity, if he had not been God, but simply the Socinian Saviour man, he would, like Paul, when he was offered worship, have rent his garments and shrunk from the awful blasphemy. But what did Jesus say? — "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son" — keeping the very connection

that they had charged with blasphemy — “ the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do ; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise ; ” that is to say, I, as Messiah, am not here acting a part independent of, or contrary to, the Father ; but what I see the Father do, that I do. “ And what things soever the Father doeth ” — making worlds, regenerating hearts, governing the universe — “ what things soever the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise.” Now he who said so, was either a blasphemer, or he was a madman, or he was the mighty God. Could I say, could an angel say, “ Whatever God the Father does and can do, that I do and can do also ? ” No, impossible ; it was the assumption of Deity. Jesus assumed to be what he was — God ; and therefore he says, “ The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth : and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” Now, if you say the creation of a dead orb is not a proof of Deity, surely you will say the communication of life is. A certain chemist thought that he had discovered that he was able to make living animalculæ or insects by galvanism ; but subsequent inquiry showed that these insects or animalculæ were introduced among the substances he was operating upon, and he gave up the pretensions that at first seemed so plausible. Whatever you can do, you cannot give life. You cannot say to a dead man, “ Rise up, and walk.” Jesus assumes not only to be the Creator of worlds, but to be the Lord and the Giver of life. And so far from shrinking from that which they accused him of, he says, “ that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.” Is it possible to conclude that Jesus does not assume to be God ? And so again, he says, “ He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father. Now, I have no doubt the Unitarian does



not mean to dishonor God, and I should be the last rashly to charge him with deliberately doing so; but if this statement be true — and a text must pass like lightning through all prejudice, preference, sympathy, feeling — then the Unitarian does not honor God; for this statement is, “He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father.” And how are you to honor the Son? “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” He that denies the essential Deity of our blessed Lord, pours dishonor upon God the Father. I do not say that the Unitarian intends to do it — God forbid. There are men of devout feeling and sincerity, seeking and groping their way to heaven, there as well as elsewhere; but I cannot shrink from the plain logical consequence of this statement, which is, that to reject the Deity of Jesus is to dishonor God the Father. In other words, we believe in the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — not a Tri-theism, but a Tri-unity. How to explain it, or to comprehend it, I know not; but it is plainly stated in the Bible, and, like other truths stated but not explained, I accept it.

He then declares that the hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and the saints come forth to the first resurrection, called in Scripture the resurrection from among the dead, and the lost to that second and last resurrection. His expression, “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true,” ought to be explained. It means, “If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not received,” because it requires two persons to bear witness; but he says, “Here is John, who has borne witness to me: here are miracles I do; these bear witness to me, and are proofs, therefore, that I came forth from God.” He then says, “Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” Now I may state here, that in the Roman Catholic version of the Bible, — and that version, with all its faults, has many

truths ; and I should be quite satisfied to combat a Roman Catholic error out of the Roman Catholic Bible, it is perfectly competent and sufficient for that, — it is not “ Search the Scriptures ; ” but “ Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life.” Now *ἐπευρᾶτε*, the Greek, may be the second person plural of the present tense, or it may be the second person plural of the imperative. It may be either, I admit : the Roman Catholic version may be the best ; we can only determine which it is likely to be by the connection of it ; but, I ask, by translating it in the present tense, do they gain any thing by it ? The very reverse. “ Ye search the Scriptures,” and this implies that in doing so they do what is right ; and he says, the reason that you do so is that “ in them ye think ye have eternal life.” The fact is, that if you translate it in the present tense, it is Christ’s assertion of an act, and an act which he sanctions ; if you translate it in the imperative mood, then it is his command to search the Scriptures. But it seems to me that the right rendering is, “ Search the Scriptures,” — that is, engage in a duty you have neglected, — “ and they are they which testify of me.”

He then complains that they will not come unto him, that they might have life. And then he says, “ For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me : for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words ? ” — if you reject the Old Testament, how can you accept the New ? If you are not saved by the Old, how can you be saved by the New ? Your own Scriptures condemn you, because you believe not their testimony.

## CHAPTER V. 39.

FATHERS AT ISSUE ON "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES." — ROME'S PERPLEXITY.— FIXITY OF SCRIPTURE.— BIBLE FOR LAITY.— INTELLIGIBLE TRANSLATION.— SEARCHING, ITS IMPORT.— WHAT WE SHOULD SEARCH FOR.— IMPARTIAL READING.— PRAYERFUL READING LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE.

I HAVE already noticed in the course of my explanatory remarks that there was a dispute between the Protestant Church upon the one hand and the Roman Catholic Church upon the other, whether the Greek verb for search ought to be translated in the present indicative, "Ye search the Scriptures," or in the imperative mood, "Search the Scriptures." In the Roman Catholic version it is in the present indicative, "Ye search the Scriptures;" in our version it is in the imperative, "Search the Scriptures." In the first it is the declaration of a fact; in the second it is the injunction of a duty. But I showed you that whether you take it in the one way or in the other, it cannot serve the purpose of the Romanist in asserting that the study of the Scriptures is not the duty of the laity; for if it be translated in the present indicative, then it is the declaration of a practice which our Lord sanctions, and which he justifies, and by which he says they may discover eternal life: and if it be the injunction of a duty, then it is an obligation upon all: either way it vindicates the blessed privilege rather than the sacred duty of searching that blessed book, which is the storehouse of the things that belong to our everlasting peace. Every member of the Church of Rome professes to interpret every text in the Bible according to the unani-

mous consent of the fathers. Where the fathers are not unanimous, by his law a member of that Church cannot put any interpretation upon a text at all. A text therefore about which they are not unanimous is a text to a Roman Catholic that might as well be written in Greek, or Sclavonic; or in some strange language with which he has no acquaintance, and of which he does not understand the meaning. Now this very text, in the interpretation of which the Church of Rome differs from us, happens to be variously understood by the fathers. For instance, Cyril asserts that it ought to be in the indicative, the present indicative, "Ye search the Scriptures." On the other hand, Chrysostom and Augustine hold that it ought to be as we translate it, in the imperative, "Search the Scriptures." Now here is one father who takes the Roman Catholic view, and here are two fathers of greater importance who take the Protestant view. We Protestants in such a matter can fling the fathers to the winds, and deal with the Bible as with an ordinary book; but the member of the Church of Rome dare not do so. The fathers are not unanimous; he therefore must put no interpretation upon the text at all; and he must therefore cease to quote it in controversy as bearing either one way or another. And if he will interpret, which his law does not authorize him to do, according to the greater weight of Patristic authority, then he ought evidently to take the Protestant view; because two more eloquent, or able, or learned fathers than Augustine or Chrysostom, the one Greek and the other Latin, it is impossible to select from the whole Bibliotheca.

Having seen thus far how we are warranted in interpreting this passage, I notice the lessons that naturally flow from it. First, the expression here applied to the Bible — "the Scriptures" — is suggestive of a most precious truth. God's word is not left to oral transmission, to traditional unfolding, but is written. The word translated by us, "Scrip-

ture," or in the plural "Scriptures," means something written. To search, therefore, the Scriptures is not, listen to oral testimony, to ecclesiastical tradition, to Patristic opinion; but, search that which is written — the scripture. And it is a very blessed fact that the Scriptures are written. They are thus a stereotype. Our opinions may vary, like clouds about a mountain top, but the mountain top remains whether the clouds are resolved in showers, or deepen into greater mist and darkness. So this blessed book, being a fixture, remains. The commentaries of men very often are in collision, but the great and blessed fact remains, that God's word, like himself, is immutable — it is a fixture — it is written.

You will notice too another lesson suggested by this expression — namely, that the word "scripture" is in the plural number, — "Search the Scriptures." Now I admit at once the New Testament was not written when these words were spoken; and of course any one wishing to argue might say that this does not apply to the New Testament. But every one will admit that it applies to the Old; and if it be a duty to search the Old, which has no greater claim, it cannot be the reverse to search the New, which has at least equal claim. If it be a duty to search that which is most difficult to be understood, it surely cannot be the reverse to search that which is most plain and easy to be understood. But apart from this, why is the plural number used? Because the Old Testament consists of many parts. The common division among the Jews was, Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets; or, the Law and the Prophets. Some parts of the Old Testament are history, some parts are biography, some parts are song, some parts are prayer, some parts are praise, some parts are prophecies; but all of them are given and inspired of God; all of them profitable for doctrine, for instruction, for correction in righteousness: and therefore the word Scripture is employed because

the several forms all constitute one great and precious revelation of God. The truths remain equally inspired, the formulas in which those truths are conveyed vary according to the writer and the circumstances of the age in which he lived.

The passage in the next place shows, that it was addressed to the laity, to all the people that were met together; some lawyers, some Pharisees, some publicans, and others; it implies that the laity, that is, Christian people, ought to have the Bible. It seems a monstrous thing to state what appears to us so obvious a truism — that a Christian should have the Bible. But yet it needs sometimes to be taught; because there are those who argue that you should not read the Bible for yourselves, but only hear it as it is doled out to you at the discretion of the preacher. Now it does appear that one of the plainest lessons taught in the Bible, and the most difficult to escape, is that the Bible is for the laity. In the first place the laity have souls to be taught; they need that book out of which they can be taught. In the second place, a layman is as capable of understanding plain and simple statement of fact as the most educated clergyman. And in the next place, the laity are just as learned as are the clergy. And in the last place, every Epistle in the New Testament, except three, is addressed to the lay people, or to the Christian people, and not to the ministers at all. And therefore it is plain that the Christian people ought to have the Scriptures; for the command to search the Scriptures implies they previously had the book, or how could they search a book that they had not in their own possession? And in the next place, the passage plainly teaches that the Bible is an intelligible book. If it be unintelligible, what use can there be in searching what we can never understand — what use in trying to go into a labyrinth that has no avenue that leads to open day? What is the use of reading a book that we cannot understand?

The meaning of a book is to reveal something; the meaning of reading a book is to inform you of something; and if we are commanded to read this blessed book, surely there underlies the previous fact that the book is intelligible to those that will impartially and dispassionately read it.

And in the next place, it would seem to imply, too, that the Bible, as addressed to all of every age and country, is a book translated into the vernacular of the country in which we live. This New Testament was written in Greek, the Old in Hebrew. Unless translated into different tongues both would be in languages that most of us do not understand. But our blessed Lord sanctioned the translation of the Bible; for he quotes oftener from the Septuagint Greek than he does from the original Hebrew of the Old Testament Scriptures. But what does this teach us? That as the Septuagint was a translation of the original Hebrew into the tongue of the great mass of mankind before the advent of our Lord, and our Lord was pleased to quote the Septuagint over and over again, it implies that he authorizes thereby the translation of the Bible into the vulgar tongue or the vernacular of the country in which it is printed, and therefore sanctions the great truth that every man should not only hear the Gospel preached, but read the Bible translated into that tongue wherein he was born.

And in the next place, you will notice here that our blessed Lord says nothing about any other depository of eternal life; "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think" — that is, you justly conclude, very properly believe, that in them "ye have eternal life."

Let us, however, turn our attention to the main duty that is insisted on, namely, "search." The word is extremely expressive. It denotes search for something you have lost. Search the earth for its Eden; search the ocean for its precious pearls; search amid all difficulty, in face of the great-

est peril, for that which you believe and know to be most precious. Now there is no earthly blessing attainable without toil; man does not earn his bread without labor. And why should we expect to have and receive truth without toil? It is right we should have the Bible, it is a privilege to be able to read it; but it is still duty to search it, and to search it diligently till we find out the great and precious truths which relate to the salvation of the soul, to the glory of God, and the well-being of mankind. The word accordingly implies that you are to explore the sacred volume as the miner explores the earth for its seams of gold, as the diver descends into the deep for its precious pearls; not ceasing to search till you have discovered what God has promised to guide you to—his own blessed and well-beloved Son. Then, in the second place, when you search the Bible, search it to discover what the Bible was given to reveal. Some people search the Bible to find out what are its opinions upon astronomy, or upon natural history, or upon some other scientific and intricate subject. If you search the Bible for that end, you treat it in the same way as if you were to search a book upon theology for lessons on astronomy, or as if you were to search a book on mineralogy for lessons on botany. You take up a book, and you read it, in order to discover why that book was written. This blessed Book, while it teaches us something of every great subject that relates to God's providential government, was intended not to make men good botanists, great theologians, acute philosophers; but to lead them to Christ and make them Christians. You are therefore to search this Book to find out what God has revealed concerning you, your responsibility, your destiny, your hopes, your fears, all that you need to know as associated with that which is your duty, and that which leads to eternal life. And in the next place, in searching this Book you must search it to find out what is God's mind, not to find texts to prove your



theory, or to vindicate your communion. Some people open the Bible with preconceived views, and search it in order to find texts to prove them. Now, that is not the way. You must lay down every prejudice at the threshold; you must leave every practice outside; and you must go into the holy of holies with your ear open to hear what God the Lord will speak. And if your most cherished prepossessions should be resisted, if your most inveterate prejudices should all be opposed, you may regret it; but you must lay down the dearest prejudices, the most cherished prepossessions, when God says the contrary is his mind, and his word, and his truth. In other words, you must not carry your creed to the Bible, and read the Bible in the light of your creed; but you must carry your creed to the Bible, and read your creed in the light of the Bible. You are not first to lay down a creed and hunt up texts to support it; but you are first to open the Bible, and find what is written, and deduce your creed from what is written in that Book, which ends all controversies, and settles all disputes. Remember that the Roman Catholic's sin is, that he reads his Bible in the light of the Church, as he calls it, or of the fathers; but it is no less Roman Catholic to read your Bible in the light of the Thirty-nine Articles, or in the light of the Scotch Confession of Faith; it is just as popish a practice. We are to read the Bible as God's Word, rejecting creeds and articles that contradict it; only thankful when we find that what we hold is supported and confirmed by this blessed and inspired volume.

In the next place, you are to search this blessed book impartially. Many people do not do so. They open the Bible, and they seize upon any passage which appears to prove their opinions, and they pass over another passage which does not fall in with their preconceived notions; and they magnify one truth, and diminish to the utmost another truth. One opens the Bible as a Calvinist; and he reads

only texts that seem to support Calvinism. Another is an Arminian, and he reads only texts that support Arminianism. Now, the fact is, we must read the whole page from its commencement to its close; and if one text cannot agree with our Calvinism, we cannot help it; if another cannot agree with our Arminianism, we cannot help it. The Bible is not Arminianism, nor Calvinism; we must bring all our *isms* to the law and to the testimony; and if they be not according to it, it is because there is no truth in them.

In the next place, we must search this blessed book always in prayer. It is a great ordinance, that the wayfaring man that searches the Bible, and prays that the Spirit of truth may teach him its meaning, will never err therein; it is no less true that you may search the Bible from morning to night without prayer, and God will not suffer you thus savingly to understand it. It is part and parcel of his own law that you shall read the Bible, but read it looking to him for light and direction to help you. And it is a blessed thought to us, that the Author of the Book still lives; and that what is in the Book which we do not understand, we may reverently ask the Inspirer of the Book to make plain and unmistakable to our minds. I do not mean that you are never to use comments, or commentaries, or notes, — I think they are most valuable. But the fact is, that each has his favorite commentator, and when he looks at a text he says, “I will believe what Scott or what Henry says;” and another, what Barnes says. Comments are very useful in their place, but you should not depend upon the comment, nor take always the commentaries upon a text; consult Scott, and Henry, and Barnes, but if needs be reject all three. They cannot take your responsibility, and you have the same understanding that they had, the same promised Spirit to teach you, the same Bible with greater light on it to study; and therefore you must search the

Scriptures for yourself, and though you may use comments, you must not incorporate them with God's own Word.

Our blessed Lord tells us, in the next place, we shall find in this book what we can find nowhere else. In all the flowers of summer, in all the buds of spring, you find life for a season, but death in the end. In all that is visible on the surface of our globe, in all our social economy, we find, day by day, gaps taking place, and faces that were familiar passing away, and recollected only in the page of memory. But in this blessed book we find tidings that have their echo in heaven; truths that never shall become obsolete or old; promises and hopes that stretch from earth, and culminate only in eternal glory. In this book we have eternal life. We have the tidings of it, it is there revealed to us: we are not left to guess it, or to work it out as a problem, but to read it as a statement upon God's authority. We have in this blessed book Him who is the Author of it: "I give unto them," says the Saviour, "eternal life; and none shall pluck them out of my hand." He is also the purchaser of it: He has redeemed us by his blood, and secured for us eternal life. And we have in this book also the promise of it. The eternal life is in the book because Christ is in it. We must not look at the Bible as if it were in Christ's stead: for glorious and blessed as the Bible is, it is to lead us to Christ, not to take Christ's place. But eternal life is not in the book, but in Christ who is revealed in the book; and because Christ is here revealed, the book that reveals him is said to have eternal life. And our blessed Redeemer therefore assures us that those that search this book in the spirit I have tried to indicate, will find in it eternal life. And the reason they find eternal life in it, and the reason why it is so precious is, "These are they" — the Scriptures — "that testify of me." The whole Bible is full of that blessed Saviour. Moses wrote of him, Isaiah proclaimed

him, David sung his praise. The New Testament is inlaid with his name; and the more clearly we understand this book, the more directly shall we be led to the knowledge and to the love of him, and to trust on him who is Alpha and its Omega, its beginning and its end.

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NOTE.—*Βηθεσδά* = “the house (place) of mercy, or of grace.” Its present situation is very uncertain. Robinson established, by personal inspection, the fact of the subterranean connection of the pool of Siloam and that called the fountain of the Virgin; and has made it probable that the fountain under the Grand Mosque is also connected with them; in fact, that all these are but one and the same spring. (See also some interesting particulars respecting an attempt made subsequently to prove this connection, and mention of a fourth fountain with the same peculiar taste as the water of Siloam, in Williams’ *Holy City*, p. 331.) Now this spring, as he himself witnessed (c. 506), is an intermittent one, as indeed had been reported before by Jerome (on *Isa.* viii. 6), Prudentius (in *Trench*), William of Tyre, and others. There might have been then, it is obvious, some artificially constructed basin in connection with this spring, the site and memory of which have perished, which would present the phenomenon here described. The spot now traditionally known as Bethesda is a part of the fosse round the fort or tower Antonia, an immense reservoir or trench, seventy-five feet deep. But as Robinson observes (c. 489), there is not the slightest evidence that can identify it with the Bethesda of the New Testament. This pool is not mentioned by Josephus.—*Alford*.

## CHAPTER VI.

CROWD FOLLOWS JESUS.—THE QUESTION OF JESUS.—MIRACLE.—  
“WASTE NOT WANT NOT.”—ELEMENTS IN CHRIST’S MIRACLES.—  
NATURE AND MIRACLES.—ADVICE OF JESUS.—DIVINE TEACHING.  
—TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

IN the course of such expository remarks as time permits me to make, I can promise only to touch the mere surface of a chapter so full of precious instruction, and so rich and inexhaustible in truth, as that which we have now read. Each verse in it is worthy of a sermon, each thought in it suggestive of a thousand. We read that a great multitude followed Jesus into the desert, because they saw the great and supernatural deeds that he did, the credentials of One who had come down from heaven, and was either God, or in the language of Nicodemus must have had God with him. It appears that this great company had come beyond the reach and the possibility of supply, having left the places where they could purchase food far in the rear, and themselves were destitute of any means of supply or satisfaction. Their zeal in following Jesus had carried them beyond what, in ordinary circumstances, seemed discretion; and they began to feel the pangs of hunger where they could see no prospect of removing or satisfying it. Jesus asked, “Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” and he did so, as in many of the questions that he put, not that he felt the least difficulty, but that he might waken their wits to see how utterly impossible it was for human supply to meet the necessities of so many, and that their minds, therefore, and their attention, might be more riveted on the stupendous

miracle of beneficence which he was now about to perform. Philip told him the honest truth, that they had only a few pennyworths of bread, and nothing at all adequate to the demands of so great a multitude. And Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, thinking that with rigid economy a fragment might be distributed to each, said, "We have five barley loaves, and we have two small fishes; but alas, what are these among so many?" Jesus, without asking another question, with all the calmness and composure that indicated the presence of the Lord of infinite resources, said, "Sit down;" and they did so. There is a remark thrown in, "Now there was much grass in the place." This is the remark of a witness of the scene. No writer merely getting up a scene, no novelist inventing one would have added so natural and so simple a remark as this, "Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand." Jesus gave thanks, distributed the bread, and, lo! the loaves multiplied in their distribution, the fish was increased in the hands of them that partook of it; and the disciples were able to gather up many fragments that remained, after the necessities and the demands of so great, and now so satisfied, a multitude. There is something beautiful in the admonition, "Gather up the fragments." He who had all the resources of infinitude at his command, would not waste a fragment! It is a common, but a Christian proverb, "Waste not, want not," and he that wastes needlessly deserves richly to want; and he that has plenty ought not to waste; for the Lord of all plenty, the Maker, Creator, and Proprietor of all, would not allow one fragment to fall that would be useful to a single human being, or that could be gathered up and collected for the benefit of others that were not there.

Now this miracle has two aspects,—first, the evidence of omnipotent power, and, secondly, what was in all the miracles of Jesus, the evidence of infinite beneficence. The

miracles of Christ have always two elements, — first, the element of power; secondly, the element of goodness; and one does not know which most to admire, — the beneficence that was in the author of the miracle, or the omnipotence that constituted the substance of the miracle. It is always to be noticed, too, that the miracles of Jesus are not comparisons with Popish miracles, but perfect contrasts. Jesus never wrought a miracle unless at the bidding of a providential necessity. He did not do miracles as freaks of power, as displays of greatness, but always to meet a want, to heal a malady, to satisfy hunger, or in some shape to contribute to the benefit, the well-being, and the happiness of mankind. And every miracle of Christ, too, was essentially redemptive; it was setting nature right where she had gone wrong; it was such a miracle as showed something was wrong in nature, and that the Lord of nature only could put it right. But we say such only are miracles; but the truth is, there is as great a miracle going on every day. The fact that you place a little seed into the soil, and that seed by the influence of the air, the rain, the sunshine, the ammonia and carbon in the soil, should grow up into a stalk, and produce golden fruits in autumn, and contribute to the feeding of ten times ten thousand, this is as great a miracle every bit. The contrast between the seed in the soil, and a loaf upon your table, is as complete as between five loaves here and the feeding of as many thousand; but we are accustomed to the one, and we call it nature; we are not accustomed to the other, and we are constrained to admit that it is the Lord of nature. But the fact is, the former is just as miraculous as the latter; and it needs as much of Deity to translate spring into harvest, as it needed of Deity to transform a few barley loaves into food for so many thousands. The fact is, we are surrounded with miracles; but they are so common that we cease to see the hand that does them. What a strange creature is man!

We get so many mercies that we cease to be thankful; we are so surrounded with miracles that we cease to see them. For our mercies we give thanks to the instrument; the miracles of God we attribute to the laws of nature; and in both we try, designedly or undesignedly, to banish God from the world, and work creation without him.

Having done this great miracle, we shall find him next departing to a distance — “he departed again into a mountain himself alone,” to spend the night in prayer, as we are elsewhere told. And his disciples went into a ship to cross to the other side of the lake of Gennesaret. A storm came on, they were tossed upon the waves, they see Jesus walking towards them. Why were they afraid? They were conscious of sin; and man’s conscience within is the interpreter of all events that take place without. Whenever there is something wrong within, we always construe what betides us without in the light of that, and think it must be an approaching calamity, not an approaching deliverer. Hence, when man suffers, if he be living in sin, he looks upon his suffering as penal, coming from a judge that now punishes him; but if he be a Christian, at peace with God, he looks upon his sufferings as chastisement,\* coming from a Father that loves him, and therefore he is not afraid. The disciples in the storm thought it was a spirit, and were afraid; but Jesus spoke to them, saying, “It is I; be not afraid.” These accents were comfort. In all time of your tribulation let the Christian hear in the midst of its waves and its noise, “It is I; be not afraid.” In all time of your sickness, or sorrow, or bereavement, hear that voice, not spent by its transmission along the centuries, but living still, “It is I; be not afraid.” Jesus is as much in the tiniest rill of sorrow that finds access to an humble orphan’s heart, as he was in the waves of the sea that lay still beneath his feet, or amid the winds when he hushed them, and there was a great calm.

We read next, that a great multitude followed him, not,



he tells them, because of the miracles which he did, but because they saw that he could give them food, and save them the trouble of working for it. In other words, they had a little of the monkish spirit — they would eat, but they would not work; and seeing One who could give them bread, they thought now they might have absolution from the trouble of toiling for it, and had only to follow, and feed gratis. Jesus instantly says to them, “Labor not for the meat which perisheth.” The word labor here is the translation of a verb that means “labor anxiously — painfully — vexatiously;” — and he means, “Do not be so irritatingly anxious about the bread that perisheth, but rather the more anxious about that living bread which endureth unto everlasting life.”

Then they ask him the question, “What shall we do,” (that is human nature,) “that we might work the works of God?” What shall we do to deserve heaven? what shall we pay to purchase it? The answer of Jesus is, I think, the most striking reply that is given in the whole New Testament, and the most satisfactory that one can quote for evangelical and vital religion — “This is the work of God” — this is what God requires — “that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” The price of heaven is the Messiah; the way to heaven is faith in him; he asks you first to believe, next to work. “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” Then they instantly exclaimed, “What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert.” He gave them bread from heaven, there was a continuous shower of manna for forty years. Now we want you to continue this; feed us from day to day by a special miracle. Jesus said, “Moses gave you not that bread from heaven” — he gave you not the living manna; he gave your fathers manna, and they ate of it, and were full; but your fathers have died; “but my Father giveth

you now the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Then they said, partly not knowing what they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." And then he tells them very beautifully, "All that the Father giveth me," or as he says in his own intercessory prayer, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them unto me" — "shall come to me." Here is the doctrine of sovereignty or election; but on the other hand, here is the responsibility of the creature, "Him" — whoever he is, whatever his age, his condition, and his ruin — "that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven; and they said, "Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?" Jesus then explains to them the difficulty of their receiving the truth. He says, a man needs to be taught of God to understand these things. Now here is just the reason of the errors and the misconceptions of man in interpreting the Bible; we need to be taught of God. We may, taught by man, see the truth clearly; but unless taught of God we shall not feel truth savingly. But if we are not taught of God, it is not because the Teacher is unwilling, but because the pupil will not submit his judgment, his conscience, and his heart, to be taught of him.

He then tells them that he is not only living bread, but he adds, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." And again, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." I need not tell you that every controversial divine belonging to the Church of Rome has made this chapter the great proof storehouse for the monstrous dogma of Transubstantiation. And certainly when a clever Jesuit quotes

such a text as that we have now read in the hearing of an unsuspecting Protestant, who looks at the text alone, wrenched from the context, and not at the whole continuous discourse, he is at once caught, and gives in his acquiescence in the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Now the first evidence that this cannot refer to that doctrine is a very simple one: the Lord's Supper was not yet in existence; when these words were spoken, no such institution was known, no such institution was expected. How could Jesus explain the nature of an ordinance that he had not yet defined or instituted? I think this alone must be conclusive. In the second place who were the people he addressed? Angry, unbelieving Capernaïtes. Is it possible that He who spoke always so seasonably, spoke about an uninstituted ordinance to a people that did not yet know the elements of Christianity, and of the Gospel? When Nicodemus came to him he preached the very alphabet of Christianity; is it likely when this unenlightened crowd came to him that he would preach to them the mysteries of an uninstituted rite?

And in the next place, let us notice the connection of the discourse: when the woman came to Jacob's well to draw water, how did Jesus discourse to her? He took the water in the well, and he made that the text from which, and through which, as a symbol, he conducted her to the living water that he could give to them that were athirst. So when this people came hungering for bread, he seizes the bread that they hungered for to feed their bodies, and he makes that the symbol of the living nutriment that was requisite to feed their souls. And then, if you notice the perfect parallelism; if you will take the 35th verse, he says, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst;" and then he says, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life;" "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" it is plain that

coming to him leads to your hungering, and that eating his flesh and drinking his blood leads to the same result; and, therefore, what he means by eating his flesh, is that just as at the Lord's table you say, "This is my body, broken for you," by which you mean, "This represents the benefits and blessings secured and procured by my incarnation, death, and atonement on the Cross for you," so to eat of that body, or of that flesh, or of that living bread, is, as Augustine sweetly calls it, "to chew the doctrine, and to drink in the truths that Christ died, and that Christ is." And very remarkable, the Roman Catholics, who profess to interpret all the Scriptures according to the unanimous consent of the fathers, seem in this chapter to forget their own law; for upon this subject the fathers are all at issue; three fourths of them interpret it as we do. Augustine, one of the most beautiful and evangelical, says this passage is a figure. He says, "How" could they eat his flesh and drink his blood? It is therefore a figure. But, if one were replying to the Roman Catholics, one would say, It will not do for you to quote this text in favor of Transubstantiation, for it says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Now, ask the Roman Catholic, You eat his body at the mass when you communicate, but do you drink his blood? His answer is, "No; we are not allowed to do that." But if the text says, "Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" and yet while quoting this text in favor of his own dogma, he himself omits one of the vital elements; namely, drinking the blood of the Son of man, had he not better let it alone? But look at the consequences this leads to. If this describes the doctrine of Transubstantiation, then every one that eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of man, hath eternal life — then Judas has eternal life; and what will shock a Roman Catholic, Martin Luther has eternal life; for both these ate the flesh and drank the blood of

the Son of man. And now the converse, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;" then that is, "Except you partake of the Lord's Supper you have no life in you;" but the thief upon the Cross got to heaven, and he did not partake of it; infants dying in infancy get to heaven, and they have never partaken of it; and therefore it proves so much, that it reduces it to an absurdity to apply this to the Lord's Supper at all. And if you ask our Blessed Lord his meaning, he tells you at once. When they were startled, and stumbled at his saying, he answered in the 63d verse, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It is the spiritual nutriment of the soul that is of good; merely taking flesh into the stomach can do you no good. "The words that I speak unto you are not to be taken in the carnal meaning in which you take them, as if I, standing before you, were to give you my flesh; but they are to be taken in the spiritual sense in which I have spoken them; and which give to those that receive them everlasting life." Thus we see there is no foundation for the monstrous dogma here; and, if there be none here, there is not the shadow of a shade of foundation for it anywhere else. We eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man when we partake of the purchase that his taking flesh has bequeathed to us, and when we receive forgiveness of sins, which is the result of his blood, still cleansing from all sin. And the reason why eating and drinking are so often used in Scripture for faith is this: what we eat is assimilated or turned into the thews, the sinews, the flesh, and the veins of our body; and so eating and drinking, as applied to spiritual things, means so believing and receiving them that they are incorporated with our very souls, and become life, and peace, and joy, and nutriment, and comfort.

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NOTE.— [32.] The Lord lays open the course of their argument. They have not mentioned Moses, — nor was the giving of the manna a miracle performed by Moses; but He knew that the comparison between Moses and himself was in their minds, and answers by exposing the error which represented Moses as the giver of the manna. Neither again was that the true bread from heaven. It was in one sense bread from heaven; but not in this sense. It was a type and shadow of the true bread from heaven, — “which my Father is giving (*δίδωσιν*) to you.” The Lord does not here deny, but asserts, the miraculous character of the manna.

[2.] The question whether there is any reference to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, has been inaccurately put. When cleared of inaccuracy in terms, it will mean, “Is the subject here dwelt upon the same as that which is set forth in the ordinance, of the Lord's Supper?” And of this there can surely be no doubt. To the ordinance itself there is here no reference; nor could there well have been any. But the spiritual verity which underlies the ordinance is one and the same with that here insisted on; and so considered, the discourse is, as generally treated, most important towards a right understanding of the ordinance. — *Alford*.

## CHAPTER VII.

VARIED IMPRESSIONS. — THE EARLY BRETHREN OF JESUS. — THEIR  
ADVICE. — THE SABBATH. — MURMURING ABOUT JESUS. — OFFER OF  
THE SPIRIT. — NICODEMUS. — HIS SYMPATHY AND INTERPOSITION.

WE have, in the whole of this chapter, the expressions of the tumultuous feelings of a crowd, some of whom were impressed with the miracles of Jesus, and others of whom could not come to any other conclusion than that he deceived the people, and pretended to be what in fact he was not. One can see that the great mass of the laity, in all probability, would have accepted Christ as a Saviour; but that the Pharisees, and priests, and those that sat in Moses' seat, because of the intensity of their passions and the inveteracy of their prejudices, were resolved at all hazards to get rid of him, to shut their eyes to the stupendous feats of beneficence he did, and to close their ears to the lessons, the arguments, and the appeals that he so impressively and so conclusively made. How painful is the very first recorded fact announced in the chapter, that the Lord of glory who came to his own had to forsake his own, in order to preserve his life to the fulness of the time. "He walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. His brethren, therefore, said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly."

The brethren here spoken of seem to have been literally by relationship the brethren of Jesus. It does not mean

brethren in the sense of disciples, for it says expressly that his brethren did not believe in him : and that, because it is added in the fifth verse, these brethren who advised him did not believe on him, it is quite plain that they gave him this advice in irony, and as the expression of contemptuous disregard. "Depart hence, and go into Judea;" do not hide that light of yours under a bushel. Show thyself to the world ; make the most of these things you do, or pretend that you can do ; show them that you can command the *éclat* which we have no doubt you are seeking. How painful that such an idea should have been entertained by the nearest relatives of the Lord of glory, and that they should have spoken to him in the language of contempt, who spoke to them only the words of everlasting life ! But mark how Jesus replied to them ; and what a precedent he is for us ! No acrimony, no smart retort, no sarcastic reply, but the answer of One who pitied their ignorance, prayed for their souls, and ever stood ready to instruct them, if they were only careful in hearing, — "Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come : but your time is always ready." The world cannot hate you, because there is no antagonism between you and the world ; but "it hateth me," and for the very obvious reason that I am compelled, in faithfulness to it, and from affection to those who are misled by it, "to testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." We then read that after this "he abode still in Galilee ;" and afterwards he came to the feast secretly ; and the Jews sought him, they having heard that he was there, "and said, Where is he?" And then you have the different impressions produced upon the public mind. "Some said, He is a good man ; others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people." But no one dare say a faithful word "for fear of the Jews." that is, the Pharisees, the scribes, and the priests. When they heard Jesus speak, "they marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters?" that is, learning. The learning among



them was peculiar, namely, acquaintance with the Old Testament Scriptures and with the proper meaning of the law of Moses. Jesus answered them, "My doctrine"—that is, my teaching, not the tenets I hold, but the teaching you hear,—“is not mine *only*,”—for that is the meaning of it,—“but his that sent me.” Its perfect harmony with God’s written and revealed law is evidence to you that I am preaching not a new doctrine, but unfolding the fulfilment of that which is old and true, as revealed in Moses, in the law, and in the prophets. He then remonstrates with them mildly why they should seek to kill him. “The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?” all the while knowing that they were lying in wait for him, seeking to destroy him. He then meets the objection they had made, that he had profaned the Sabbath. He says, Moses, in order to fulfil a ceremonial law, used the Sabbath when it was the eighth day for the fulfilment of that law. If, then, Moses, in order to fulfil a ceremonial requirement used the Sabbath, how should you complain that on the Sabbath day I have fulfilled not a ceremonial requirement, but an obligation of mercy, of charity, and of love? If it be lawful to do what is ceremonial on the Sabbath, it is, *a fortiori*, lawful to do what is merciful on the Sabbath, for mercy is greater than sacrifice.

They then objected to Jesus that they knew whence he was, but that no one would know whence the Messiah was. This was their misapprehension; for the prophets had expressly said that he should be born in Bethlehem. But others again said, “When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?” And the moment that the Pharisees heard the least murmuring of conviction it is said they repelled it, and sent officers to seize Jesus. He then told them that he would go, and that they should not be able to follow him. “Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall

not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?" His answer is, "Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me." And then, in the last day, that great day of the feast of tabernacles, when its solemnity, its joyous solemnity, arrived at its utmost pitch, Jesus addressed to that tumultuous rabble, some scoffing, some mocking, others seeking to betray him, others prepared to kill him, all hostile to him, those words of comfort and of peace that must have indicated to all that heard them the presence, not of man, but of the mighty God: "If any man thirst," — thirst for any one great truth, for satisfaction in any one great doctrine, for rest to his conscience, for peace to his heart, for wisdom to his intellect, for an enjoyment for the present, — if any man thirst for any of these things, let him come not to the priest, not to the synagogue, not to the Church, not to the Apostles, but to Me.

"He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow fountains of living water." And the "living water," that he here especially speaks of, he says, is the Holy Ghost. And it adds, "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The Spirit was always in the Church — individuals were always regenerated; but the great prophecy of Joel was not yet fulfilled — the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost being contingent on the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. The crowd was again agitated with different conjectures about his character; the officers that came to seize him were struck dumb — the Pharisees anathematized the people; at all hazards they determined to destroy him. An incident occurs, which shows that the least light will shine to the perfect day. "Nicodemus saith unto them;" and it is added within a parenthesis, "he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them." He turns up again at the death of our Blessed Lord; and this shows that the first lesson that he learned in the 3d chapter of this Gos-

pel, when he came to Jesus an anxious inquirer, had not forsaken his memory, or passed through his heart without leaving an impression: he uttered a sentiment that was as just as it was good — “Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?” — all the thanks that he got for the utterance of an aphorism that ought to have commended itself to the consciences he addressed was, “Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet;” supposing that Christ was a Galilean.

## CHAPTER VII. 40, 43.

DISPUTES ABOUT THE MESSIAH.— HIS BIRTHPLACE.— CONTROVERSY.  
— PROPHECIES OF THE MESSIAH.— TYPES OF MESSIAH.— MIRACLES  
OF JESUS.— HIS LESSONS.— HIS MORALITY.— HIS ANSWERS.— HIS  
LIFE.— HIS DEATH.

FIRST of all we find in the passage specially selected from the chapter we have been considering, the strongest evidence of the wavering and fluctuating character of mere popular impressions. Some of the crowd that witnessed the great miracles that Jesus did, said, "Of a truth this is the prophet" predicted by ancient prophets to precede the advent of the Messiah. But others said, and perhaps neither knowing well what they said, "This is the Messiah," the Anointed One; while others again objected to this last conclusion, in itself so true, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" clearly remembering in Scripture that he was to be born in Bethlehem; but either wilfully or accidentally ignorant of the fact that Jesus in all respects responded to the Scripture prophecy, and was not as they imagined born in Galilee. How strange that the same beautiful sight should make so conflicting impressions on the great crowd that were assembled to witness it. Why was it so? Just for the same reason that the same text makes different impressions on different minds that read it. The fault was not the dimness of the light, but the depth and number of the prejudices of them that looked at it. The reason why different interpretations are given by different individuals of the very same text in Scripture, is not that the text is obscure, but that our

minds are clouded by prejudice, our hearts warped by passion, and we drag the Scripture in the direction of our wishes, instead of subduing our wishes to the decision of God's holy Word. Some thought that he was Elijah the prophet. All expected him to precede the Messiah. They could suppose that this wondrous person, this inexplicable preacher, this remarkable performer of remarkable deeds, was the prophet that should precede the Messiah; but having a notion carefully instilled in their minds by them that sat in Moses' seat, that the Messiah was not to be a sufferer, but an illustrious conqueror, they could not bring themselves to the humbling conviction, that the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief, was that predicted Messiah, who was to shine before his ancients gloriously, to reign from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. The reason of this was, there was no conquering presence in his march, there was no sign of an illustrious personage; he had none of the evidences of a mighty prince, nor did God promise that he would be so. They did not understand that there must be the inner conquest over sin by suffering, before there could be the outer conquest over a world that was defiled by it. They could not understand that they were the slaves of any one but Cæsar, or that they needed a freedom that Cæsar's sceptre could not bestow, or Cæsar's power, when enlisted against it, prevail to take away. The fact is, they looked at one side of the picture; they were right in their expectation of a triumphant Messiah, but they were quite wrong in looking at the promise of his triumph and shutting their eyes to the obvious predictions of his sorrow, suffering, and death. All the prophets proclaimed a Conqueror that is to be, but it was conquest through suffering; it was a crown of glory preceded by a wreath of thorns; it was a throne of majesty reached by a cross. It was too humbling a thought that the Messiah should die; they rejected it because they did not like it; and as he did not

answer to their idea of a Messiah to conquer and to reign, they said, "This is not the Christ; he deceiveth the people; he is not the Messiah."

You will notice in the next place an instance of the strange mistakes that a crowd commits. They said, what they supposed upset all his pretensions, he came out of Galilee. Now, they said, Galilee is not to be the birthplace of the Messiah; for the prophet Micah says, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old." They quoted Scripture rightly, but they assumed that to be a fact in the history of Jesus which was not so. Their premises were right, the Messiah is come from Bethlehem; their assertion was wrong, or their information was incorrect, that Jesus was born in Galilee; and on these wrong premises they constructed the disastrous conclusion, that Jesus of Nazareth could not be the Messiah. "And there was," we are told in conclusion, "a division among the people." The Prince of Peace the cause of division! He that came to consolidate the joy, the hopes, the interests of humanity, starts a controversy that ended in his crucifixion and his death. Why this controversy? Because men with the Scriptures in their hands read them in the light of tradition, and people gave credence to the priest, instead of opening the Scriptures and judging for themselves. And thus he that came as the Prince of Peace created only division; his own prophecy was fulfilled wherever he appeared, "I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword." And yet I venture to say now, these discussions, undesirable as they are, are far better and bigger with promise than the apathy that very frequently and extensively prevails. Discussion, however angry, may end in truth; indifference, never. Better the controversy that stirs the passions, than the dead and stagnant calm of a mind without inquiry, and

a heart without real peace. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then it is peaceable. The greatest storm often precedes the most lasting calm. The age of inquiry is always the mother of an age of the most enlightened and lasting quiet; and the quiet that controversy breaks is worth parting with, for the sake of the peace to which controversy leads. Far better, therefore, that we should be men earnestly discussing something about religion, than caring for none of these things. With all the sins and faults of what is called Tractarianism that has infected a portion of the Protestant Church, it is better than the dead, stagnant sea that preceded it. Far better have men discussing the color of the robes they are to wear, than hunting foxes, or playing at cards and gambling. And surely this earnestness, even if that earnestness be wrongly directed, is preferable to the dead apathy which regards all colors as equal, all concerns as equally insignificant, and time and eternity not worthy of a thought in comparison with the amusements of an hour, or the passions of a day.

We have seen, then, the tumultuous disputes that prevailed in the crowd; we have seen the conflicting conclusions to which in succession they came; we have heard, however, in the midst of all, a few — the select few it may be, but still a few, — who concluded in language of soberness and truth, "This is the Christ." Let us ask ourselves, and let me endeavor to show you very briefly, treading upon ground that has been frequently trodden, how much there is in Scripture, and how much those Scriptures in the days of our Lord ought to have been then sufficient, to prove that Jesus is what he professed to be — the Christ of God, the Messiah of the nations, the Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of his people Israel. So plain does it seem to me, that if Jesus of Nazareth be not the Christ, the Old Testament Scripture is a perfect riddle.

But the coincidence between the Messiah as sketched by

the prophets, and the Messiah as embodied on the streets of Palestine, is so striking, that it is impossible to escape the conclusion, that the prophets sketched from a living original; and that the original took the place of the copy when Jesus taught and did his miracles in Jerusalem and before all the people.

First, if we appeal to ancient prophecy, "The woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head" — "Born of Mary, of the seed of David." "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet" — that is, from before him — "till the Shiloh" — that is, the Messiah — "shall come." The Sceptre departed from Judah, the sovereignty from the tribes, when Christ came. Isaiah speaks in most express terms, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" — birth, relationship. And what shall be his name? "For his name" — "his name," in Scripture, means, "he shall be" — "he shall be the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the age to come, the Prince of Peace." We read in one passage of Isaiah, "He shall reign over all the earth;" we read in another prophet, "The ships of Tarshish and the isles shall bring their presents unto him." We read in another, "Of his kingdom there shall be no end on the throne of David." We read in another prophet, he is a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, stricken, bruised, wounded. Now I do not say it is impossible (I mean, for argument's sake), that some one may not come to answer to such prophecies; but I do say, that Christ who has come responds letter for letter, touch for touch, line for line, to them all most emphatically. The portrait of the Messiah in the prophets was inexplicable till Christ came. One prophet says, he is God; another prophet says, he is man; one says, he shall live for ever; another says, he shall die. One says, he shall sit upon his throne a king; another says, he shall be wounded, stricken, smitten, afflicted. Now, how



can I conceive that possible in any future character that can step upon the stage? And yet the impossibility of our conjecture is translated into actual fact when Jesus comes, a God, that walks upon the waves, that speaks to the winds and they obey; that wakens the silent dead, that cures inveterate disease, that restores sight to the blind, and gives token that he is God. And yet on the other hand he sleeps, he is hungry, he is weary, he is wayworn, he is betrayed by a disciple, he is buffeted and smitten, and oppressed, and crucified. All the evidences of a God; all the traces of a man; all the majesty of the one; all the misery and the sufferings of the other. Truly Isaiah, Malachi, Moses, Elijah, all the prophets, seem to me to gather round the Cross; and when Christ, in mingled agony and triumph, exclaims, "It is finished," they give up their messages, and universally pronounce the everlasting verdict, "Truly this is the Son of God, this is the Son of David; this is he of whom we and all the prophets wrote."

Again, we gather that Christ is what some of the crowd concluded him to be from the ancient types. What is a type now? It is a likeness, an engraving on clay or on metal of an object that has been impressed upon it; a piece of engraving on brass or on steel placed upon clay, or gutta percha, or wax, or any other substance capable of receiving an impression. Now, if you take the types that seem to be the impressions of a great living original, and bring them all, varied in kind, in time, in circumstances, in nature, to the Cross of Christ, to the person of Jesus, you see at once that it is impossible to escape the conviction, that they all relate to Him who is the Christ, the Son of God. The rock rent in the desert by the rod of Moses, from which the streams gushed forth, how like him of whom it is written, "That rock was Christ;" "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." The manna that descended from the skies and fed the hungry, how like Him who says, "I am

the living bread that cometh down from Heaven; whosoever eateth of the bread that I shall give him shall never hunger." The brass serpent raised upon the pole, for the dying Israelite to look at it and instantly to have bodily health, how like Him who said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever looketh unto him or believeth on him may not perish, but have everlasting life." The cities of refuge into which the criminal manslayer might flee, and find a shelter till he appeared before the tribunal of his country, how like Him of whom it is written, that "by two immutable things wherein it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Take any one of these types; the sacrifice on the altar, the altar in the temple, the priest officiating by it, the high-priest in the holy of holies! all are separate from each other, you cannot weld them into one mass, and see in them when confounded together any thing like unity of object, or purpose, or harmony. But when you bring them to Christ, you see that they so fit him as the most intricate key does the most intricate ward; that you cannot but conclude, that either he was made for the type, or, what is the feasible and probable thing, that the types were instituted and made for him. I ask, therefore, any man to compare the actions in the New Testament with the predictions of the prophets, or with the impressions struck upon different objects as typical of him in the ancient economy, and to say if there be not a perfect unity, a harmony and an adaptation that indicate design, and that design completely fulfilled when Jesus comes into the world our Saviour and our Lord. If you were to select one of Bramah's or Chubb's locks, or the lock of the yet more celebrated locksmith of America; and if you were to pick up a key that, when applied to it, intricate and perplexed as its wards and its machinery are, were exactly to

fit it, your conclusion must be that the key was made for the lock, and the lock adapted to the key. Why should we not apply the same logical common sense to a grander and nobler problem? When we compare the types of the ancient economy, the prophecies of the inspired prophets, with Christ when he comes into the world, the adaptation is so perfect, even in the most intricate, minute, and elaborate features, that it seems to me common sense cannot escape the conviction, that either the Old Testament was written after Christ, which history irresistibly disproves, or that it was prewritten with a purpose to foreshadow Christ, which itself incessantly and frequently affirms. Or suppose, — to take another illustration, — suppose that a beautiful figure, a statue, is made of marble, or a cast, if you like, of plaster of Paris; and suppose that one person in this country made a finger, another person in Paris made the arms, another person in Germany made the feet, another person in Italy shaped another part of the body; and suppose that all these parties, having accidentally, as the world would say, made the different fragments of a human body, in different ages, under different *régimes*, in different countries, in different circumstances, should all meet together one day, and it should be found that all the fragments when put together constitute in all its unapproachable perfection the statue of the celebrated Apollo Belvidere, what would your conclusion, what would your inference be? That a great presiding architect or sculptor, who outlived all ages, and was present in all countries, gave inspiration to every sculptor's mind, direction to every sculptor's chisel, and inspired them to construct each part with the distinct and definite design that it should be one grand and living original. Now you find in this blessed book that Isaiah describes one feature, Jeremiah another, Moses a third, Micah a fourth, Malachi a fifth, David a sixth; men living in different ages, under different circumstances, with totally different tastes; and when they all come together to

the Cross of Christ, each part fits the other, and combined together they constitute the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. What is the inference? This is the Messiah of whom the prophets wrote; thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. To whom can we come but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

I might also allude to another remarkable proof, a type in one respect indeed, but totally different from the rest; namely, the sacrifices of the ancient Levitical economy. If you read Leviticus, you will see there that the Jewish temple was, if viewed irrespective of a grand original that was to come in the fulness of the time, a sort of slaughter-house. What could have been more painful — I would say reverently, if looking at it without referring to the New Testament, more disgusting — than the ceaseless slaughter of innocent lambs, the daily pouring out of their blood into basins and around the altar? What can explain this? Why the necessity for this, except it was God's design to teach the great lesson, that without shedding of blood there could be no remission; and to point forward the nation's hope and the nation's heart to him who should come in the fulness of the time. There is no apology for Levi except Christ; there is no justification of Leviticus except in the Gospel of Christ. Take away the New Testament as the complement of the Old, and one half of the Old might be consigned to the flames, and the world would not be the loser by it. But look at the Old in the beautiful light of the New; bring Moses, that ancient servant, into the presence of Jesus, that rejected Lord; and the face that shone with celestial glory on the Mount will shine with a richer splendor on the Mount of Transfiguration; and the Old Testament, instead of being an unsatisfactory, painful, and repulsive compilation, will be seen to be a grand discipline, a holy preparation, a voice ever sound-

ing in the desert, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world."

Thus, by an appeal to all that is ancient, and by a contrast of what that ancient is with Christ the Saviour, we can come to the conclusion of the few, that this is the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world.

If, again, we turn to the miracles that Jesus did, and next, to the lessons that Jesus taught, we shall be constrained to arrive at the very same conclusion. Take the miracles of Christ: he healed the sick, he opened the eyes of the blind, he restored the withered limbs; and mark you, not by a process which a physician could employ, but by a word which a God alone could dare to utter. He raised the slumbering dead, the waves lay still the instant that his holy feet touched them, the wild winds ceased the moment that he spoke to them. These are facts more sure than that Alexander the Great lived, or that Cæsar gained his victories, or that Napoleon fled from the snows of Russia, or that the French were conquered at Waterloo. I say, these miracles done by Christ are the most authentic facts in Christendom: so much so, that if you cannot believe them on the strength of the testimony adduced for them, you are bound not to believe any witness in a witness box, or any chapter in the history of any historian who has recorded the annals of the past. And mind you, the evidence that Christ did miracles is as satisfactory to my mind as the sight of Christ actually doing them. The sight of a miracle done may be more impressive, but the convincing proof of a miracle that was done must be equally conclusive. As far as the credential of a truth is concerned, it matters little whether I see a miracle myself or be satisfied, on competent authority and testimony, that a miracle was done. Now what were the miracles of Jesus? Not mere freaks of power, but fraught with inexhaustible beneficence. I think the most triumphant proof that the miracles that Christ did were totally

different from every thing that has pretended to the name, is just a comparison of them with all other supposed miracles performed by monks and priests in the history of mediæval Europe. You will find, if you read the bull of canonization of a Romish saint, or the documents adduced in order to guarantee or to secure his canonization, that he blazed with miracles, that, in fact, he radiated miracles on all sides; he could not move but, like an electrical jar, he illuminated the night, he could not speak but miracles were done; in short, he was a sort of fire-prodigy, a sort of walking, startling, blazing phenomenon; something so absurd, so anile, so extravagant, that, in order to make the reason good, you can see that the clever monks outwitted themselves, and proved and established too much. But if you read the miracles that Jesus did, you find he never did a miracle unless there was an occasion to require it. And when he wrought a miracle, what was it? It was giving a dead son to a weeping mother, bringing a dead brother to the home of sorrowing sisters, restoring sight to a blind man, hearing to a deaf man, strength to a withered limb. Every miracle he did was as remarkable for the beneficence it embosomed as for the power by which it was characterized and marked. The miracles of Christ were acts of omnipotence, full of beneficence, holding forth grand truths for the study, the adoption and acceptance of mankind. And if I see God's omnipotent arm stretched through the cloud in order to hold out a lamp for my feet, I have evidence that that lamp is a heavenly one, by the very fact that an omnipotent arm holds it out for my acceptance and for my guidance. Nothing therefore can be more conclusive than that the miracles that Jesus did were the credentials of his mission, authenticating at once his origin, his character, his object, and his aim. And there was this distinction; if you watch an apostle doing a miracle, — and they did miracles, — and compare his doing it with Christ's doing one, you will see there not

comparison, but contrast. In every instance, Christ says, "I say unto thee, come forth," "arise," or "be healed." But when an apostle does a miracle, "In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk;" "by the authority of Jesus of Nazareth" so and so. In other words, Christ did miracles in virtue of an original power; an apostle did his miracles from a derived and borrowed power: the former were the miracles of a God, the latter the ministry of his servants, acting in his name and by his authority. If, then, Jesus wrought the miracles predicated of him, and not only did the miracles predicated, but did those wondrous, beneficent, and stupendous deeds that indicated a messenger from heaven, we are constrained to conclude, that he was what the most enlightened of the crowd accepted him to be, that Christ who should come into the world, and that no man ever did greater miracles than these.

Take, in the next place, the lessons that he taught, and the very same conclusion will be reached. I can conceive nothing so exquisitely beautiful as the parables, that he made the cups to contain his precious doctrines. Take the parable of the prodigal son, of the lost sheep, — or the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Can you conceive any thing more exquisitely simple, more touchingly beautiful, or in its lesson, the lesson that it taught, any thing more precious and important? There is in the teaching of Jesus a simplicity so transparent that a child can understand it, and yet a depth so profound that the wisest and the most accomplished scholars have never yet exhausted it. I cannot conceive a finer composition in the world than the simple, severe diction that Jesus used, and the sublime and noble truths of which that diction was the vehicle. Wherever there is the highest genius you will always find simplicity; the simplest words charged and made instinct with the grandest truths. Take the great poet Shakspeare; speaking of him simply as a poet, his language is more like, in

its structure, the language of our noble translation of the Bible, than the language of any writer or any poet in the world. But simple, severe as Shakspeare's language is, how rich, how magnificent the thoughts of which it is the vehicle. So if we take the teaching of Jesus; any one single chapter, — the fifth chapter of St. Matthew — what lesson, what purity, what perfect morality! And mind you, it appears to us simple enough; it appears to us so reasonable, that we wonder anybody could have possibly been ignorant of it; it seems to be the simplest and easiest discoverable thing in the world. But I need not tell you, that all great discoveries always look the most simple when they are made. So much so, that you say, "I wonder how men did not discover it before." The great law of gravitation in the days of Sir Isaac Newton was not known till he first discovered it; but now that we know it, it seems such a simple law, that we are amazed that the world waited so long, and never happened to stumble on the discovery of it. So the morality of the New Testament appears to us to be so natural, that we are amazed that the preacher should quote it as an evidence that Christ was God. But the way to know what it was, is to read the morality of Rome or of Greece, or of the Scribes and the Pharisees; and when you have done so, read the morality of Jesus, and you will find it is not comparison, but absolute contrast; and that nothing but a heavenly teacher, to say nothing more, could have taught a morality so simple, so pure, so definite, so applicable to every age and phasis of social life, till at last we can predict with absolute certainty that the beatitudes of Matthew will survive the pyramids of Pharaoh and of all the kings of Egypt.

When Jesus was asked a question, watch the wisdom with which he spake on one occasion; the propriety with which he answered on a second; — never a word too much, never a sentence too little; his very silence often his most sig-



nificant teaching; and never opening his lips except to force upon the listening and reluctant hearts, "Never man spake like this man."

Notice, as another proof of his Messiahship, the life that he lived. Now, what a life the life of Jesus was; clearly not the product of the age, but something altogether distinct from, and contrary to, the age. The life of Jesus was not a growth of the earth, but an inspiration from heaven. It is impossible to conclude that Christ copied any living model, or drew the maxims that guided him from any earthly source; or to come to any other than the old and true conclusion, that he was what he professed to be — the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. The spotlessness of his walk, the unstained purity of his character — a biography not stained by a crime, not tainted by a spot — not even obscured by a single indiscretion; whence was this character, and what made it? How can you account for it, except on the hypothesis that he was what he professed to be? Satan held inquisition on him, and could find nothing in him; his bosom friend that betrayed him was constrained to own he had betrayed innocent blood; Pilate that condemned him found no fault in him, and his wife only saw an innocent man. Here was one, then, admitted by friend and foe, by the nearest and the most remote, by his companion in his travels, and by the crowned prince upon his throne, to be spotless and blameless. How was this? What was he?

And as no man lived like this man, let me add, no man died like this man. What calmness in his death! What patient quiescence in all the injurious treatment he received! What yearning compassion upon others, what insensibility to the sorrows, the pangs, the agonies preparing for himself! What mingled elements of greatness and of unearthly glory — "To-day shalt thou be with me, in Paradise;" what terrible evidence of pain — "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

\* How is it that this innocent Being was a sufferer — that the only innocent was the greatest sufferer? that God's law, that perfect holiness was perfect happiness, was broken in the case of his own dear Son? The only explanation of it is, he died not a martyr, but a victim; not an example, but a sacrifice. And as never man spake like this man, so never man lived like this man, and so never man died like this man.

Again, his resurrection from the dead, the apostle says, preaches him to be the Son of God with power. The giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was the triumphant proof that he was risen. He says to the apostles, "Tarry at Jerusalem till ye be endued with power from on high." If the Holy Spirit had not descended, then the evidence would have been irresistible evidence that Christ was not the Messiah. See next the progress of the Gospel. During the first century Christianity made greater progress than it did for any three centuries that succeeded. It made converts in Cæsar's household; it christianized the shops, and the markets, and the forum of Rome; it found trophies of its power in imperial armies; it convinced with few words, it conquered without force, and became no longer the religion of the despised and crucified Nazarene; it trod down the prejudices, overcame the passions, broke through the hostility of man, till the sign of the Cross was emblazoned on the Imperial Labarum; and Constantine fought under Christ as the Great Captain of his salvation.

But our best proof that Christ was the Messiah is our personal experience of what he is. What prejudices in your minds has he overthrown, what evil appetites in your heart has he melted by his power? Has he not healed your poignant sorrow? has he not extracted many a barbed arrow? has he not sweetened many a bitter affliction? has he not subdued hard hearts? has he not regenerated wicked ones? has he not lightened your heaviest

loads? Have you not gone to him in prayer on the supposition that he lives, and risen from prayer with the conscious experience and delighted demonstration that he is? And are you not persuaded, from your own personal intimacy with him, that he is none other than the Son of God, the Saviour of the world? And in the next place, what has been the effect of the progress of Christianity among the nations? Those hospitals raised for the poor, those asylums for the aged, those refuges for the destitute that dot our native land as with bright and inextinguishable stars, are all the creations of Christianity. There was not such a thing in heathendom, nor in savage lands, nor anywhere, except where the Gospel has left the traces of its power and taught its beneficent and its noble lessons. You may say of Christianity, if you wish to see the monuments and proofs of its inspiration and its truth, what is written of Sir Christopher Wren in St. Paul's Cathedral,

“Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.”

If you want to see a proof of its beneficence, of its truth and its power, look around you and see the monuments it has raised.

And lastly, if we have found Him precious to ourselves, the least that we owe him is to tell them that do not know that he is so. We have been great receivers, let us be great givers. Much we have received, much we are answerable for. Let it be our delight, not simply our stern duty, to make his ways known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations.

May the Lord bless his Word, and to his name be praise. Amen.

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NOTE. — The Lord seems here to allude to the custom which prevailed during the seven days of the feast, of a priest bringing water in a golden vessel from the pool of Siloam, with a jubilant procession

to the temple, standing on the altar, and pouring it out there, together with wine, while meantime the Hallel (Ps. exiii. — exviii.) was sung. This practice was by some supposed — as the dwelling in tabernacles represented their life in the desert of old — to refer to the striking of the rock by Moses ; by others, to the rain, for which they then prayed, for the seed of the ensuing year ; by the older rabbis, (Maimonides, cited by Stier, iv. 395,) to Is. xii. 3, and the effusion of the Holy Spirit in the days of the Messiah.

But it was universally agreed (with the single exception of the testimony of R. Juda Hakkadosh, quoted in the tract Sueca, which itself distinctly asserts the contrary), that on the eighth day this ceremony did not take place. Now out of this difficulty-I would extract what I believe to be the right interpretation. It was the eighth day, and the pouring of water did not take place. But is therefore (as Lücke will have it) all allusion to the ceremony excluded ? I think not ; nay, I believe it is the more natural. For seven days the ceremony had been performed and the Hallel sung. On the eighth day the Hallel was sung, but the outpouring of the water did not take place, “desideraverunt aliquid.” Then Jesus stood and cried, etc. Was not this the most natural time ? Was it not probable that he would have said it at such a time, rather even than while the ceremony was going on ? — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER VIII.

MODE OF CONVEYING TRUTH. — WOMAN TAKEN IN SIN. — WISDOM OF JESUS.

IT is very important to notice the great practical good of such discussions as those contained in this chapter, both in regard to the freshness with which they come before our minds, and the clearness with which truth is taught and reiterated. If the whole of the truths contained in this chapter had been put in the form of an essay, or a creed, or a series of articles, they would have been like flowers compressed between the leaves of a book, retaining, it may be, something of their original color, but without fragrance, without life ; in short, without what is their greatest beauty. But here you have the flowers living, fresh, and every truth brought before you so clearly that you read it with all the interest of a hearer, and with all the sympathy of a witness present at a discussion between Him that spake as man never spake, and them that objected as none should ever have objected. This chapter is full of these discussions. Our blessed Redeemer presents himself here as the great Christian controversialist ; and in those that were gathered round him we see objectors and disputants, not willing to be convinced of the truth because it rebuked their sins, and only ingenious in finding subterfuges under which to escape those thoughts that kindled disquiet and conviction of conscience within.

We read that a woman taken in adultery was brought before Jesus by the Scribes and Pharisees, not because they hated the sin and wanted its signal and just retribution ; but

because they thought that, just like the instances of doing something on the Sabbath day, or of the duty of paying tribute to Cæsar, they might find in it an admirable opportunity for entangling, or ensnaring or involving Jesus. They brought her to him, and said, "Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?" They said so, "tempting him." How tempting him? Tempting him to sit upon the judgment-seat, or the tribunal of law, which was the function of a public magistrate; and to pronounce a sentence to be followed by the effects of that sentence. Now if he had done so, instantly Cæsar would have come down upon him, and said, "You, a stranger, assume the office of a magistrate! You are going out of your own province, and entering on one in which you have no jurisdiction or right." Then, on the other hand, if he had said, "It is not sin," which he never did say, and could not say, of course they would at once have had a pretext that this is not the Messiah. If he had passed judgment, they would have said, "This man steps into Cæsar's place;" if he had pronounced approbation, "This man violates the express law of God." They thought here were two horns of a dilemma, and upon one of the two they must fix Him who here, as on other occasions, spake as never man spake. Our blessed Lord, with a wisdom that, I think, cannot be accounted for except on the supposition that it was what we know — divine — turned the whole thing against themselves; and they that digged the pit for him were cast into the pit that they dug. For instance, after they said so, he wrote with his finger upon the ground; silence and quiet. It is best in difficult circumstances to be slow to answer; although He, of infinite wisdom, needed not to reflect; but he was a model, and a precedent for us, and the first answer is not always the best. I regret that our translators have added at the end of the sixth verse what is not in the original, and which really is very bad, "as though he heard them not."

Now that would convey that our blessed Redeemer pretended not to hear them; but there was no such pretence, and therefore in the original Greek the words, "as though he heard them not," are not found. I need not, I dare say, remind you that wherever you find in the Bible words in italics, you must always infer that those words are not in the original, but are supplied by the translators to fill up what they think the meaning; but in this instance they are sadly mistaken. However, such is their honesty, that wherever their own filling up is, there you have that filling up in distinct type, that there may be no mistake about it.

After this, "he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin" — not, I think, this, the woman's specified sin, but he that is without sin of some sort, or of some dye or degree; he that is innocent, and is conscious he deserves himself no retribution — "let him throw the first stone." Now this was not pronouncing sentence, and bidding them execute it upon the woman brought before him; it was saying, "Very well, that is your case. I do not dispute what Moses said; I am not here to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; and as you have found the criminal, as you have quoted the law, and as you are the proper executioners of the law, I say nothing except this, that if any of you are conscious that you are innocent of this and of every other sin, then let that individual throw the first stone." This struck their guilty consciences like a barbed arrow, and it rankled there. They could not answer him; they were convicted each one in his own conscience, and they went out, beginning at the eldest, who reflected first and deepest, to the youngest, and left Jesus and the woman alone. What a magnificent answer to a carping question; what a triumphant disposal; and how utterly impossible to find in any tongue wisdom so opportune, so rich in mercy, so clear, so pertinent, so fitted to do good to them that cavilled, as well as to convey lessons to them that read the story of it! When

he found himself alone he lifted himself up, and said, "Woman" — a respectful phrase; and here is a lesson for us. It is the same word that Jesus addressed to Mary, — "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" So here, "Woman." Sin is the misfortune of the sinner; it is God's part to judge, it is ours to pity. Even in its ruins we should respect and reverence humanity. You do not make a sinner repent more deeply, that you denounce, and scorn, and despise him; your respect, your tender sympathy, will produce a deeper impression than the most withering and contemptuous "Stand aside, for I am holier than thou." Jesus therefore says to her, so mildly, and yet so truly, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? And she said," — to him that knew her heart better than she knew it herself, — "No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee;" not, I do not condemn your sins; not, I deny that you have committed sin, for the very words of Jesus are, "Go and *sin* no more;" because it was sin, and heinous sin; but he says, "I do not condemn you; the Son of man is come not to condemn the world, but that the world through him may be saved." "I am not here," as if he had said, "to exercise the function of a judge, but to show forth the mercies of a Saviour, therefore neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more; showing thy repentance," which he could see when we cannot; "and show that thy repentance is genuine by the purity and consistency of the rest of thy life hereafter." Is not this the finger of God? Is not this story a real one, a Divine one? Can we doubt its origin, can we fail to be profited by its beautiful incidents?

Then, after this, Jesus preached to the Pharisees: "I am the light of the world." You say, why introduce this thought? The reason is plain. On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, the eighth day, as it is called, they had splendid lights, all was gaiety, pomp, and splendor; and probably Jesus,



looking at the lights in the treasury, had suggested to him the maxim or the thought, "I am the light of the world." Those expressions, "If I bear record of myself my record is not true," are understood only by reference to the law. It does not mean, "If I bear record of myself my record is not true;" but it means, "If I bear record of myself, my record is not accepted in a court of justice as at all evidenee." It is the *ipse dixit*, as it were; it is not testimony that either vindicates me or establishes my claims. And, therefore, if I have no one upon earth to bear witness to me, I have One whose testimony you ought to defer to — my Father, who you say is also your Father in heaven. Then Jesus said, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins." What an awful prophecy was that, literally and terribly fulfilled. Then said the Jews, evidently in sarcasm, "Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go ye cannot come." "He said unto them," not bitterly, not in retort, but quietly, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*" — Now, you observe the word *he* again, in the 24th verse, is not in the original; it is in italics; and, therefore, it ought to be, "For if ye believe not that I Am" — that is, if you refuse to recognize me as Jehovah, the supreme God, God over all, "ye shall die in your sins." What did God say to Moses? "Tell them that I Am hath sent thee." That is the most wonderful revelation of God that I know. You remember an ancient heathen philosopher was asked to define God. He was allowed a day; at the close of it he said he had studied all day, and he was no nearer the definition than when he began. He was allowed another day, and another; and it was only to say that he could give no definition of God. But that one definition of Deity contained in the Old Testament, and repeated in the New, "I Am" — all past, all present, all future, luminous,

transparent to me — what a magnificent revelation of God is that! And the reason of this “I Am” is, that with God there is no time. We speak in our common language of what is past, what is present, and what is future; but that is merely trying to clothe an infinite idea in human speech. With God there is no past, and there is no future; it is an everlasting, enveloping, transparent, luminous *now* — “I Am.” I may just add too here what has been often given as an illustration of the Trinity. I do not say that it is a proof of it, but it is one of those analogies that one cannot but be struck with. There are only, in all language, and in all conceivable thought, three persons; there is not a fourth. There is “I am,” “Thou art,” “He is;” and when you have said that, you then must repeat it, only making it plural, “We are,” “You are,” “They are;” the same thing. So that there are only three persons, three conceivable things; and *I* involves *thou* or *thee* — and *thou* involves *him* or *he* — and so *vice versa* — as if there were dim shadows projected into human speech and human thought of the great truth, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God.

Again, he deals with an objection that they urged against his claims, and tells them that when they have lifted up — that is, crucified — the Son of God, then they will know who he is. He then addressed the Jews that believed on him, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” The Jews instantly cavilled at that expression, and they said, “We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man.” Now, what an awful lie was stated in these words! They were in bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt, they were in bondage in Babylon, they were at that very moment in bondage to the Roman Cæsar, for Judea had become a province, and their public officers were the appointment of Cæsar, and they were really in bondage at that moment; but yet, in order to injure him, they said

what they knew to be absolutely false. Jesus, however, does not reply, as he might have done, satirically; but he carries the argument to the heart, and he says, "Whosoever committeth sin is *the slave* of sin," for that is the meaning of it; "and the slave abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever," having right, privilege, authority. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And then he adds, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed"—that is, according to the flesh, literally—there is no doubt of that; but you know that you cannot be Abraham's true seed, for you seek to kill me, and you know that Abraham would not do that. "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father." Jesus saith unto them, "If ye were Abraham's children"—and he admitted they were according to the flesh—"ye would do the works of Abraham." How frequently does Christ supersede all lineal connection by moral and spiritual! And all that he says to the Jews as Abraham's seed applies most strictly to the priests of Rome, who claim to be Peter's lineal successors. In all this chapter, if I wanted the most powerful argument against the pretension of the apostolical succession, even admitting that it were strictly true,—and it is strictly as untrue as any one thing can be—admitting that it were strictly true, our blessed Lord says that as the Jews, Abraham's seed according to the flesh, proved they were not so, by their wickedness; so they who say they are the apostles' successors according to their lineage, prove they are not so by not obeying the precepts and preaching the truths of the apostles. And, therefore, our Lord teaches us the thought, that spiritual relation to Abraham was true descent; and that preaching apostolical doctrine, we may view as the just inference, is the only true apostolical succession. They then said, "We have one Father, even God." Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God." He

then told them, "Ye are of your father the devil; he was a murderer," as in the case of Cain and Abel, "from the beginning." Now, I ask those who deny the personality of Satan, with a consistency that leads them to deny the personality of the Holy Ghost, how it is possible to gather from this 44th verse that our Lord speaks of a figure of speech, or of the symbol of wickedness? Is not all the language used here that which can be predicated of a personal being? "Ye are of your father the devil; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." Now could you turn that into, "The principle of evil was a murderer from the beginning; the principle of evil abode not in the truth?" Why, being the principle of evil, it would be nonsense to speak of its not abiding in the truth. "When the principle of evil speaketh a lie, the principle of evil speaketh of his own; for it is a liar, and it is the father of it." What nonsense would it make! and how impossible therefore to escape the conclusion that Satan is a personal being! Then when Jesus told them, plainly referring to a higher life than the life of the body, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" the Jews construed all literally—and they always did so. When he spoke of living water, the woman saw nothing deeper than Jacob's well; when he spoke of living bread, the Jews could not understand how he could give them his own flesh; when he speaks here of never dying, they could not conceive of any life higher than the life of the human body; and therefore they said, "Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham," the greatest of all, "is dead, and the prophets; and what do you mean by speaking of anybody not dying?" Jesus said, "If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God." And then he said beautifully and truly, "Your father Abraham rejoiced"—literally "leaped for joy"—

“to see my day, and he saw it.” There is only one dispute about the meaning of that. Some think that he saw him by the telescope of prophecy, or by faith through the vista of two thousand years; others think that our Lord asserts, that being in heaven a glorified spirit, he saw Christ a sufferer and a pilgrim upon earth, “and he saw it, and was glad” Then the Jews said, “Thou art not yet fifty years old.” Fifty years was regarded among the Jews as the very meridian of manhood, and that after fifty years strength began to decline. “Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” How could you know that Abraham saw your day unless you have seen Abraham? and how can you have seen him? He is long ago dead, and you are not fifty years old. Then Jesus said, in words that were either blasphemy or the declaration of what he was — the ever-blessed God — “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was,” — not, mark you, “I was;” but designedly and intentionally, — “I Am that I Am” — the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End — Jehovah.

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NOTE. — The Lord's challenge to them would lead to a condemnation by comparison with themselves, if they condemned at all; which they had not done. The words of Jesus were, in fact, a far deeper and more solemn testimony against the sin than could be any mere penal sentence. And in judging of it, we must never forget that He who thus spake knew the hearts, and what was the peculiar state of this woman as to penitence. We must not apply in all cases a sentence, which requires his divine knowledge to make it a just one.

The first reference seems to be to the murder of Abel by Cain. See the Apostle's own comment on these words, — 1 John iii. 12, 15. But this itself was only a result of the introduction of death by sin, which was the work of the devil. Adam and Eve were the first whom he murdered. But then, again, both these were only manifestations of the fact here stated by Divine Omniscience respecting him, that he

was ποκτονία, ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, — the author and bringer in of that hate which is ἀνθρωποποκτονία, 1 John iii. 15. The mention of "murder" is introduced, because the Jews went about to kill Jesus; and the typical parallel of Cain and Abel is certainly hinted at in the words, "The death of the body is not reckoned as death, any more than the life of the body is life," in our Lord's discourses. See chap. xi. 25, 26, and notes. Both words have a deeper meaning. — *Alford*.

## CHAPTER IX.

BLIND MAN. — QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CAUSE OF BLINDNESS. — ANSWER OF JESUS. — CURE OF BLINDNESS. — EFFECTS OF CURE. — MISCONSTRUCTIONS OF PHARISEES. — OBSTINATE ENMITY OF PRIESTS. — ABLE REPLIES OF BLIND MAN. — SUBSEQUENT CONVERSION. — GUILT OF THE PHARISEES.

THIS chapter opens with one of the most remarkable miracles, both as an evidence of the power and of the beneficence, recorded in the Gospels. It appears that a certain man, who was blind from his birth, sat by the way-side begging; and the disciples seeing the man, and hearing the fact that he was born blind, asked their Master, who alone was able to answer all the questions they could put, however difficult and perplexing, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" There was much that was true, and much also that was superstitious in the question, when they asked, "Who did sin, that he was born blind?" They suggested their conviction of a great truth, that sin and suffering are intimately associated. Wherever we see suffering, there we see the progeny of sin. But they erred in supposing that in every individual instance the greatest sufferer must be the greatest sinner: that was wrong. "Think ye that those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, were sinners above all men? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." So they concluded, because this man was a special sufferer, that he must himself, or in his parents, have been a great and signal sinner. Now we are not called upon to judge in individual instances because we admit the universal propo-

sition that suffering is the child of sin. The idea that his parents sinned, and that he therefore was visited, was an interpretation, or rather a comment upon the statement, "visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children;" which has been reversed in the Christian economy, at least as explained before Christ came, and is arrested as a law as soon as the children refuse to walk in the way of the parents. Jesus answered them in the practical way in which he always answered such curious questions. Never fail to notice, that in the Bible there is much to engage the mind, much to interest the heart, but nothing to gratify a mere curiosity: and therefore Jesus said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents;" neither is the cause: you are not called upon to discuss the origin of it; but the practical lesson that is to be deduced from his blindness is this, that the works of God "should be made manifest in him." Do not trace such effects to their causes, nor facts always to reasons; but see what good can be deduced from the most perplexing of facts — glory to God, and benefit to mankind.

Then Jesus told them that as long as he was in the world he must work the works of God; and when he had spoken he moistened the clay, anointed the eyes of the blind man, bade him go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He went and washed, and saw. Now there was a process here. Why a process? In one instance he spoke, and it was done; in another instance, he touches with his finger, and the ears are opened. Why use a process here? The reason of it was, that they might see that the virtue that healed the man was not in the means, because utterly inadequate to do it, but in Him who was pleased to use the means, and make them the ministry of so great and so precious a benefit: and that the means themselves were not regarded as at all adequate to the cure, is obvious from the discussion in the chapter. The Pharisees never attempted to say there was special virtue in the clay, nor did they venture to assert that



the waters of Siloam had any healing virtue ; they admitted that a wonderful deed was done. they gave no solution of the phenomenon, they attributed it to no intermediate agency, but they tried to explain it away by referring it to God, beside and beyond and above Christ, and all else that might involve the recognition of him as Lord and God. When he had thus healed him, "the neighbors therefore" — how natural what follows ! it is evidently not an invention ; it is so natural, so precisely what might be expected to occur, that one while reading it can almost picture the crowd, the blind man with his eyes opened, the carping Pharisees, the wondering people, the self-possessed and sublime Jesus, the Lord and Giver of life, in the midst of them ; — "the neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?" We all know what a prodigious effect upon the human countenance the eye has. If you look at a marble statue you can see a great want — the absence of the living eye ; if you look at a blind man, the deformity of the face from the deadness of the eye is extreme ; and hence the transition from blindness to sight casts a sunshine over all the face that will make the most intimate friend of the blind man doubt if this be the once blind friend with whom he walked and conversed before. So the neighbors, when they saw the man the subject of this transformation, said, "Is this he?" Some said, "It is he ;" and others could not help saying, "It is like him ;" but to settle the whole dispute, he said, "There is no doubt of it : I am just that very blind beggar that was born blind, and I have now got my eyes opened." When they heard his voice they were satisfied that it was himself, because they recognized in the tones of his voice the traces and the evidences of his personal identity. A person's voice is as varied as the expressions of his countenance. It is one of the remarkable proofs of the infinite resources of Deity, that out of a million faces hav-

ing the same generic features, there are not two the fac-similes of each other ; and out of a million voices, all speaking precisely the same note, there are not two voices exactly alike. The infinite variety in the expression of the human face and in the tones of the human voice is something perfectly marvellous ; and they recognized in this man, therefore, by the tone of his voice, the peculiarity of his accent, that it was he, changed as he was, who sat by the way-side and begged. Then they asked him, "How were thine eyes opened?" And he answered, for he did not yet know that Jesus was the Christ—"A man that is called Jesus" did so and so, "and I received my sight." "Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not." Then they brought him to the Pharisees, who were the doctors of the law, and who were supposed to be able to explain it. "And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." The Pharisees instantly thought they could make it a grand point against him because he had dared to heal on the sabbath day. They said, "This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day." Now what a monstrous perversion of the sacred day, when those who were appointed to guard its sanctity regarded the conferring of good, the bestowal of a blessing, as the desecration of a day that was meant to be a benefit and a blessing to mankind ! But they were so anxious to find an excuse for rejecting Jesus, that they were ready to strain the interpretation of the law to the utmost in order to prove to the people that he broke the law, and could not be the Messiah. Then others said to him, "Well, if it be true, he did this upon the sabbath day ; how can a man that is capable of sinning do such a miracle as this?"

There was a division among them. The power that was in the miracle, equalled by the beneficence that it produced, was proof that some one greater than man was here ; and if some one greater than man, a divine being, how

could he break the sabbath? It is far more reasonable to suppose that you put an interpretation on the sabbath that it was not meant to bear, than that a man who could do such a stupendous miracle was other than a divine being or a messenger from God. They therefore appealed to the blind man, "What sayest thou of him?" He said: I have no doubt of what he is; the thing is so palpable, the change in my happy experience is so great — "he is a prophet. But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind;" they would rather deny their senses than admit that Jesus was the Son of God; they would rather contradict a palpable fact than accept him as the Messiah; so powerful is prejudice, so distorting is antipathy, so fallen and apostate had they become who sat in Moses' seat and professed to be the expounders of the law of God. They therefore sent for the parents of the man, to put an end to this dispute; and the first question they put in due legal order was, "Is this your son?" They of course said he was. Then, Was he born blind? Of course, they said he was. Then, thirdly, "How doth he now see?" What capital lawyers! like men expiscating evidence, apparently only anxious to reach the truth of the matter. His parents, under a deep apprehension of consequences, and yet with an uprightness and an honesty that were perfectly remarkable in persons in their circumstances, said, This is our son, there is no doubt of that; and he was born blind, there is no doubt of that: but that they might escape the penalty of publicly avowing their belief in Jesus, they said, "But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself," — thus escaping themselves from the consequences of an open declaration of what they knew to be true. "Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner;" — that is to say, "Now do not say that this

man gave you your sight ; God has done it, the great God, in a very wonderful way ; but as to this man having done it, it is all nonsense ; he never did any such thing. It is a mere hallucination of your own ; get rid of it. Praise God for the blessing that you have received ; but as for this man, we know that he is a sinner, and never wrought miracles, and is utterly incapable of doing so." The man, however, had a good deal of that terse common sense which was not to be put down by such subtle casuistry : and therefore " he answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not," — that is your business, as being Pharisees, — " one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee ?" If you will persist in giving this man the credit, let us hear the process. We think you are deceived, you have made a mistake. They were trying to make the man disbelieve his own senses : and a great deal of subtle reasoning may sometimes eradicate convictions that were originally deep and apparently unfaltering. But they evidently had a stronger mind to deal with than they supposed : his blindness had made vigorous the mind within in proportion as it had withdrawn his attention from objects that were without, and now, when they try to make him disbelieve the senses that God had given him, he shows by the vigor and the pointedness with which he replies, that he was not to be put down, or forced to deny facts, or to explain away a palpable and undeniable experience. " He answered them and said, I have told you already, and ye did not hear," — that is, you did not believe, — " wherefore would you hear it again ?" and he says to them, with consummate satire, " Will ye also be his disciples ?" as much as to say, — I am one, but you seem so anxious to get the truth of the matter, that I must infer you are anxious to be his disciples. This exasperated them beyond all expression. They instantly exclaimed, We be his disciples ! " We know that God spake to Moses : but as for

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this" — the word *fellow* is not in the original — "but as for this *person*, we know not from whence he is;" and therefore do not talk as if we, men of learning, men of knowledge, were wishing to become the disciples of such a pretender as this: we belong to Moses, we sit in Moses' chair. The man answered and said, Very well; since you have subjected me to examination, let me suggest that herein is a marvellous thing; you say he is a sinner, and yet he has done a deed that ought to prove from whence he is; he has done what none but a God can do: so great in power, so rich in beneficence, have you any difficulty in believing that he is from God, who does miracles that exceed in splendor and in power the most stupendous miracles of Moses? How can you, learned men, doubt that such a one is from heaven? "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind." "They answered and said unto him," gathering up their robes about them, shaking off the dust from the feet, treating him with contemptuous derision, "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" And they instantly cast him out of the synagogue. But, blessed thought! him that men shut out, Jesus is ready to take in.

Many have been cast out from the synagogue who have never been cast out by Christ; and therefore it says, that "Jesus heard that they had cast him out of the synagogue; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on one higher than a prophet — the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" I believed on a prophet, but I did not know that God the Messiah was come. "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe!" and recognizing the presence of the Lord of glory, he bowed down and "worshipped him." Jesus instantly added, "For discrimination" — for that is the meaning of the word — "I am come into this world, that they who profess to see whilst

really they are blind may not see; and that they who are blind, and feel that they are so, may be translated into marvellous light." The Pharisees that heard him instantly called out, What! do you mean to libel us? Do you slander us? "Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were really blind, ye should have no sin:" that is, you should not be chargeable with your offences, for you would not know that there is any guilt; but because you say you see, you admit that you know; but whilst knowing, will not accept me as the only Redeemer, your sin remaineth on you, or, you shall be punished.

## CHAPTER IX. 25.

NATURE. — CHRIST'S MIRACLES. — REDEMPTION. — BLINDNESS OF MIND. — ANALOGIES. — OPENING THE EYES OF THE MIND. — THINGS SEEN IN A NEW LIGHT. — THE SOUL. — SIN. — THE LAW. — CHRIST'S WORK. — BIBLE. — SANCTUARY. — SABBATH.

A GREAT practical truth in this chapter is worth special study. "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." John ix. 25.

We have seen that this is the description of a literal fact, or of a change passed upon the eyes of one who is stated in the commencement of the chapter to have been born blind. We have seen in this miracle not only the evidence of power that was omnipotent, but the influence also of beneficence that was divine. You must often have noticed in the miracles of Jesus not simply and distinctly absolute power, but a conveyance of great beneficence; so much so, that one knows not which most to admire, the omnipotence that shines in the act, or the benevolence and wisdom that act as the cup of the miracle. You will see too in this miracle another instance of the tendency of all the miracles of Jesus; namely, their restorative and redemptive character. Every miracle that Jesus wrought was the restoration of what nature had become to what nature once was, and what nature will one day again be. We are so accustomed to things as they are, that we say those things are natural. But the truth is, our present state is a most unnatural one, a most abnormal one, the result of sin, and not the creation and production of God. Blindness was not one of the things

over which God said, "All is very good;" illness, sickness, premature death, old age, and decay, were not among the original constituent elements of the world in which we live. These things have crept in, the consequences of a great fall, of a terrible transgression; and you notice in the miracles of Jesus instances of the removal of these things, the retuning of the shattered strings of creation's harp, and the bringing forth from every string sounds of its ancient harmony, earnest and preludes of that glorious state when Paradise shall be restored, and all that sin has done shall be swept away for ever and for ever. But it is not in this light that I have looked at the miracle, nor is it at the triumphant evidence it presents that a real miracle was wrought. Never was a poor witness subjected to so sifting a cross-examination; and never did a witness come from the witness-box more triumphantly vindicating the claims of Him who had wrought the miracle, or the simplicity, sincerity, and honesty of the testimony of him who had experienced it. Let us look at his words, not in their literal meaning, but in their moral meaning, warranted as we are by almost every page of the Scriptures. Is there such a thing as blindness of mind, darker, and more to be deplored, than the blind darkness of the body? Is the figure ever employed in Scripture to denote that state into which men have been precipitated by sin, and out of which they are brought by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit of God? We have only to refer to innumerable texts to find that it is so. "Their foolish hearts have been darkened:" — "they were turned from darkness unto light" — "the works of darkness" — "the hidden things of darkness" — "he hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." The Pharisees were "blind leaders;" not physically, but morally so. "He that lacketh these things is blind:" showing that this disease incident to the body is the true characteristic of man's mind. By nature, wherever man is, there is the mind darkened; and wherever man



feels his mind so darkened, there is a call to him to pray, "Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see wonderful things out of thy law."

Now what is the effect of such darkness in the mind, or of blindness of the eyes of the understanding? When a man is physically blind he cannot distinguish the tints of a flower from the color of the clay or the soil in which it grows. The rainbow to him has no more glory than the street on which he treads; the starry sky, that splendid apocalypse, has no more solemn beauty to him than the desert on which he walks. And it is very much the same with the man, the eyes of whose understanding are closed. Those exquisite distinctions, that are appreciated by the Christian man, are to him who is in his natural state of blindness and of darkness altogether invisible. The beauties of holiness he cannot appreciate — the deformity of sin he cannot understand. In the dark all things look equal; to the depraved mind all the distinctions that make heaven differ from hell, the saint appear distinguished from the sinner, are one vast and indistinguishable chaos in which he can see no beauty, distinction, order, or harmony. In the next place, wherever the mind is thus darkened, or the eyes of the understanding thus shut, the person who is the subject of it cannot see or find out the way to heaven. We are told there is a way to heaven, but we must see it, we must know it, we must understand it, and be satisfied that it is so. But as long as the mind is blinded by unbelief, so long that way is rejected. Ways that seem to us more plausible are accepted in its stead, and we walk in these in preference to that which God has pointed out. Again, the fruits of holiness are not distinguishable to a person whose mind is in this state of darkness, or does not bring them forth. A plant that grows in a subterranean fissure, far from the light of day, grows up sickly and unproductive of fruit; and the man who has not the light of the Son of Righteousness shining into his mind,

brings forth none of the fruits of the Spirit, which are righteousness, and peace, and joy. His growth is stunted, his progress is arrested; if there be life at all it is sickly; and only does he begin to live, in the loftiest sense of that word, when translated from the darkness of sin into the marvellous light of the gospel of Christ Jesus.

Now if any one reader or hearer has experienced that change it is the subject of consciousness. I can scarcely think it possible for a man to have undergone such a change, and not to be aware of it. I know there are some who have been sanctified from their birth, upon whom the light has broken a faint, dim ray, and slowly expanded more and more into the perfect day. But wherever the change takes place suddenly, there must surely be the consciousness of that change. The man whose history is recorded in the Gospel said, "Whereas I was blind, now I see:" and if you have undergone suddenly, in the providence of God, so vast a transformation as that from darkness to light, from blindness to seeing, from a dead insensibility to the things of God, to an acute appreciation of them all, you must be conscious of it, and must be able to say, "I cannot say when the change took place; I cannot exactly state how it was; but this at least I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see." And I know no evidence equal to this. The man who is a proof of Christian power by being the subject of a Christian transformation, is the noblest credential that Christianity can present. Argument may fail, facts may be denied, reasoning may be perverted or turned aside; but a living monument of a power unequivocally divine is as strong and as decided an evidence that Christianity is true, as if God bowed the heavens and proclaimed the fact among mankind. There is a miracle still fresh and living in every section of the church; a miracle that turns the heart of stone into flesh, that opens the blind eyes, that revolutionizes the taste, that makes you know what you could not under-

stand, love what you once hated, glory in what you were once ashamed of. That change is so real, so decided, so divine, that the man who is the subject of it is a living witness that the Bible is true, that Christianity is divine, and that neither the one nor the other is a cunningly devised fable.

Now when the change I have spoken of takes place there are two things that will be presented in a new light, and I wish you to test your own position by the different criteria I endeavor to educe. If your mind has been enlightened by celestial truth — if the eyes of the understanding have been opened — if you are the subjects of this beneficent and heavenly power, many truths that you saw dimly, or saw not at all, you will now see clearly, and estimate at their real and inherent value. For instance, the soul you will see in a new light. Once you thought, and anxiously asked, “What shall I eat, what shall I drink, wherewithal shall I be clothed?” but the idea of food for the soul, of a hope for it beyond the grave, of education of its powers for a destiny above the stars, never once entered into your mind. But since this new light dawned upon your understanding, you now see that the body is but the tent, the soul the magnificent inhabitant within. You now feel that the care of this life may be duty, but that the care of the life to come is an absolute necessity. You ask now what you never dreamed of asking before, “What shall it profit me if I gain the whole world, and lose my own soul?” Why this change? why is it that once it was, “Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die?” but now, “What must I do to be saved? what shall become of me beyond the grave? what ground have I of an expectancy of glory? what reason have I for believing that it will be well with me when that change comes to me that comes to all, and I shall appear — I myself — at the judgment-seat of Christ?”

In the second place, if you have the eyes of your under-

standing opened you will see sin in a very different light from what you saw it before. Once you thought sin exaggerated by the preacher, and portrayed with exceeding hyperboles by most passages of Scripture: once you thought that a sin was merely an excusable violation of conventional propriety, or a fair and clever trick in trade which commercial morality could easily excuse, and triumphant success would be sure to atone for. Now you see sin as the transgression of a holy law, and something very different; in that monosyllable you see condensed the greatest evil, in its issue everlasting and inexhaustible ruin; and from regarding it lightly, or, in the language of Scripture, "making a mock of sin," you now regard whatever violates God's law, or infringes God's will, as evil, exceedingly and intensely evil. Taking these two things, then, the soul and its futurity, sin and its character, when your eyes have been opened, your apprehension of these has undergone a revolution, and you see them set in a light, and covered with a brightness with which you never saw them before. And in that altered view you have the triumphant proof, "whereas I was blind, now I see."

Take, in the next place, the heart. How differently do you look at it now from the way in which you looked at it before! Once you said, "Well, I have this fault, and I have that fault, and I have been guilty of that indiscretion, and of this impropriety; but everybody knows I have a good heart, everybody knows I am amiable, affectionate, wish no man ill, and wish everybody, even my greatest enemy, all good;" and you think that if there be much wrong in your past life, there is a background of much excellence in your inner heart. But the moment that the light of the Gospel streams into your eyes, and you see that heart naked in its undisguised and essential nature, in the light of that truth in which all things must one day without exception appear, you come to believe that the Scripture does not exaggerate, but rather

justly expresses the real condition of the heart, when it says it is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." You believe there is some truth in what the Saviour said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adultery, murder;" and you see now that your heart, instead of being that amiable, unexceptionable thing that you once believed it to be, has latent in it — undeveloped it may be, but latent and living in it — the seeds of all that would rend the earth, dishonor God, and ruin the soul.

In the next place, if this light has shined into your understanding, you will see God's holy law in a different aspect from that in which you saw it before. In your natural state you thought God's law very useless, and not only useless, but excessively severe; and you reasoned with yourself thus: — "What a pity that God should have made a law so rigid that nobody could obey it; and then, in order to put it right, gave an atonement so stupendous as the sacrifice and death of Christ Jesus;" and you have wished that there were no law, just as man has wished that there were no God. And from thinking the law too severe, you have come to think, as the very logical and proper inference from it, that God never would inflict its extreme penalties, or that he would at least be far more indulgent than that law reveals him to be. But since you have learned what sin is, and seen what the curse is, and noticed and ascertained that the law is the exponent of God's mind, is inseparable from God as the sunbeam is from the sun, true if God had never said it, because it is only God's thought, God's will, God's mind, audible, engraven, understood, imprinted upon the page; you come now to see that God's law is what the apostle calls it, just and good; it condemns you, but you cannot help it; it rebukes you, but you cannot help it; you justify the law as the expression of what should be, you only condemn yourself. You therefore regard God's law no longer as a severe and rigid demand which humanity ought not

to attempt to obey ; but as a law so holy, so just, so good, that if all humanity should fail to obey it, all humanity deserves everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Instead of arguing the infliction of penalty as impossible, you regard the very certainty of its infliction as one of the grounds on which you are led to put your trust in the Gospel. If God can enact a law, attach to it penalties, but shrink from inflicting them, you might justly enough infer that God may preach the Gospel, promise blessings, but forget or shrink to bestow them. It is the very consistency of God in all that he says that gives you confidence in him as the Great Sovereign of heaven and of earth, who changeth not, nor repenteth ; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

In the next place, if your eyes have been opened, you now see as you never saw before the necessity of Christ's great work. When first you heard of Christianity you thought it was a very great provision for a very small offence ; and that God might have struck out some better plan, some less painful one, than the incarnation, the sufferings, and the sacrifice of the Son of God. But now you have learned what sin is, you have seen the brand it has left upon your soul ; you have traced its evil and the poison of its presence from Paradise till now ; you have seen how impotent you are to obey the law, how stained you are by innumerable breaches of it ; and you now see that by deeds of the law no flesh can be justified ; and that unless there be provided such an atonement as that which is proclaimed in every page of the Gospel, there can only be for you a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation from the presence of God.

In the next place, if your eyes be opened, and this light has shone into your mind, you now see God's character in a very different light.

Once you thought God was very much like his law, angry, revengeful, relentless, tyrannical ; you never dreamt of his presence except as repressing what you would wish to

do ; you never remembered religion except as a thing sepulchral and full of gloom ; you never thought of the sacrament except as an awful and an inapproachable solemnity. But since this light has shined into your understanding, since your eyes have been opened, you have detected in God not the avenging tyrant, but a merciful and loving Father ; and you have seen in religion, not the rain and storm of his wrath, but the sunshine and the radiance of his love ; and you behold in a communion table, not a trap set to catch you, but the expression of his love, the memorial of his mercy, the pledge to mankind that he that died upon the cross will come again and receive you to himself, that where he is, there you may be also. I know nothing that more distinguishes the natural man from the Christian than the estimate that he forms of God. I could teach all London that God is a dreadful tyrant waiting to damn them ; but it needs the grace of God to teach, in contradistinction to this, that God is a Father, preparing for his returning prodigal, not penalties of wrath, but a festival of joy, of gladness, and of peace.

Again, you have learned since this light shined into your understanding, what is the only way of acceptance before God. In your state of darkness, you could not see it ; since the light shined into your mind you can now see that there is but one way that leads from the depths of ruin, and pauses not in its upward ascent till it rests upon the very throne of God. But you have learned in that light which has shined into your mind, that that way is not the way of your own doing, nor the way of your own suffering, nor a way that you have cut out, or strike out, or pay toll on, or purchase or secure by any process, or by any patronage, but a way provided, perfected, complete ; so broad that the greatest sinner may walk in it, so holy that the least sin cannot be admitted in it, giving strength to him that treads it until you walk and are not faint, you run and are not

weary. Thus all these blessed truths shine in a new and glorious splendor. You see all things in a holy and beautiful light. What perplexed you before perplexes you no more; what was unintelligible before is intelligible now; and the remaining truths that seem to float far beyond the distant horizon, which you cannot comprehend, you are satisfied to lay aside, with the blessed assurance that what you know not now you shall know hereafter.

If you have obtained this light — if being once blind you now see — you will admit what so few are ready to admit, that it needs, to change that heart which you have detected in its inherent depravity, nothing less than the Holy Spirit of God. No regenerate man will believe in baptismal regeneration, for the simple reason that he felt his heart before too hard to be softened by the saturation of a little water, and his nature too depraved to be regenerated by a sacrament, even a divine one; that it needs nothing less, and it can need nothing more, than God the Spirit to quicken the dead, to open the blind eyes, to change the heart of stone into the heart of flesh, and to fit for heaven him whom Christ's righteousness has entitled to admission to its unspeakable glory. And in the next place, if you have had your eyes opened, if you now see, you will regard the Bible in a very different light from that in which you regarded it before. Once you looked upon the Bible as a very dry book; and if a man of æsthetic and cultivated taste, the best that you thought of it was, that it has some snatches of exquisite poetry, some passages of true eloquence, many chapters of real and transparent history; but you never thought of going into its holy places, of watching the glory that burns within; of hearing not Paul, not Peter, not John; but the Lord of Paul, and Peter, and John, speaking through them. Now it is to you no more a beautiful tale, an interesting romance, still less is the reading of it a penance, and the study of it a sacrifice; it is now precious as gold, sweeter than



honey from the honey-comb ; it is no more a curious relic, a decent article of furniture, an appropriate book for the library, which it would be ungentle to be without ; it is now a light to your feet, and a lamp to your path ; and you find no money too much, no time too great, that is spent in mastering its truths, becoming acquainted with its facts, and learning its beautiful relation of the way, the truth, and the life, the soul's importance, and the path that conducts that soul to eternal and everlasting joy.

And if once you were blind and now see, you will see the sanctuary in a very different light from what you saw it before. You used to come to church because it was decent, or because your fellow parishioners would brand you as a man not conforming to the proprieties of life ; but except to have your children baptized, and your dead ones decently buried, and yourself to get a character for order and consistency, you rarely thought of going to the house of God ; and at best you thought that once a day was more than God might reasonably exact, or society might fairly expect you to attempt. But now it is altogether altered ; you come to the house of God not as a duty, but as a privilege ; not as a sacrifice, but as a pleasure. You feel a delight in its praises, you feel profited by its prayers, instructed by its sermons, taught by its lessons ; and you go down into the weekdays' duties with a more elastic step, and a more bounding heart, because you have had Sabbath day refreshment, and Sabbath day strength. This is a change so real that nothing can explain it, except the shining into the understanding of a divine light ; nay, so real is it that you can hear a bad sermon, because of the precious truth that is in it ; that you can even hear a defective one, for the grains of gold that are in it ; there may be much in that sanctuary you do not like, much in this chapel you do not prefer, but you go there ; and such is your thirst for living water, and your hunger for living bread, that you can give up forms

that you love, and worship in forms that you do not prefer, because the latter have what the former have not — the means and elements of instruction, of progress, of comfort, and of peace.

And so, the Sabbath will present itself to you now in a very different aspect. Once when Saturday came you looked upon the Sabbath as a day it would be difficult to get over. No morning newspaper for the breakfast table upon the Sabbath — what a calamity! no business in the counting-house — how shall we get rid of the day? The clubs are all shut, the news-rooms are all inaccessible, the market we cannot find anybody in — what shall we do? The rail or the steamboat, it is not respectable to go upon these on Sunday — how shall we get rid of this dull day? That was once the feeling. Or if you were harassed, as thousands are, during the six days of the week, you looked forward to the Sunday as a sort of seventh day night, that you could spend in sleep, in rest for the overtasked and wearied frame. But now all is altered. The sunshine of the Sabbath, that gilds the spire of the city with its earliest beam, is to you unspeakably beautiful. The chimes of its bells are to your ear full of music; and instead of longing for the day to be done, you hail the day as the princess of days, as the queen of the week; as a festival, not a fast; as a rejoicing feast, not a painful and laborious penance; and you are only sorry that the Sabbath sun sets, and you long for the dawn of that glorious sun which shall rise on a millennial sabbath, and not set, if he sets at all, during a thousand years of sunshine. Now this change that has taken place is real; this alteration of taste is not a reformation, it is a positive revolution; it is not an incidental alteration of taste, it is a radical transformation of nature. Why is it? — how is it? The evidence of a divine touch is as real in such a change as it was in the blind man; and you too may say with equal truth, “Whereas I was blind, now I see.”

Let me ask, have you shining into your minds this celestial light? Have the shutters of passion been taken down from every mind? have the clouds of prejudice been scattered from every heart? Can you say, "Once I was blind, in darkness that might be felt; and though I have not now the noon and the meridian sunshine, yet I see in these traces in my heart the first beams of the approaching day; pledges and promises that he that has begun the good work in the grey dawn will consummate that good work till it burst into the splendor and glory of a meridian noon?" And if we have received our sight, the least that we can do is to tell the proud Pharisee, and cold Sadducee, and cavilling sceptic, and thoughtless worldling, "Come, see a man that can open blind eyes, that can transform sinful hearts, that can quicken dead souls, that can fill with light the eyeballs of the born blind." The least that you can do, if you yourselves have tasted that the Lord is gracious, is to tell others where that grace may be found, and how, upon what cheap terms, without money and without price, they may have grace, and glory, and every good thing; and as sure as we have the light shining on these, the problems and the truths we have indicated, so sure shall we reach that blessed and cloudless state where we shall see Christ as he is, and so be like him; when the glass through which we see darkly now shall be broken, and we shall see all things as they are. There is not a ray of light in the soul of the humblest saint, that is not to him the token, the earnest, and the pledge, of that light which shall never have a close, of that sunrise which shall never have his setting. Pray, then, that He that is the Fountain of light, would give thee light. Say to him, "Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see wonderful things out of thy law. Turn thou me from darkness unto light. Blessed Lord, make me pure in heart, that I may see thee, Lord Jesus, that I may receive my sight."

NOTE. — The reason of his being sent to Siloam is uncertain ; it may have been as part of the cure, or merely to wash off the clay, — the former is most probable. A beggar blind from his birth would know the localities sufficiently to be able to find his way ; so that there is no necessity to suppose a partial restoration of sight before his going. The situation of the fountain and pool of Siloam is very doubtful. Robinson makes both at the mouth of the ancient Tyropæon, south-east of the city. He himself explored a subterranean passage from this spot to the Fountain of the Virgin, higher on the banks of the Kedron.

[40.] They ask the question, not understanding the words of Jesus in a bodily sense, but well aware of their meaning, and scornfully rejoicing, “Are, then, we meant by these blind, — we, the leaders of the people?” [41.] The distinction in expression between the two clauses must be carefully borne in mind. The Lord is referring primarily to the unbelief of the Pharisees, and their rejection of Him, and He says, “If ye were really blind,” (not, “confessed yourselves blind,” — Kinnoel, Stier, De Wette,) “ye would not have incurred guilt ; but now ye say, ‘We see :’ ye believe, ye have the light, and boast that ye know and use the light, and therefore your guilt abideth, remaineth on you.” Observe there is a middle clause understood, between “ye would never have incurred guilt,” and “your guilt remaineth ;” which makes it necessary to take the λέγετε ὅτι βλέπομεν as in a certain sense implying βλέπετε, namely, “by the Scriptures being committed to you, by God’s grace, which ought to have led you to faith in Me.” — *Alford*.

## CHAPTER X.

THE SHEPHERD. — FALSE CHRISTS. — THE DOOR. — HABITS OF EASTERN FLOCKS. — SHEPHERD TO DEFEND AND FEED FLOCK AND FOLDS. — CHRIST'S POWER TO DIE. — CHRIST'S DEITY. — CHRIST RECEIVES WORSHIP AND ASSUMES TO BE GOD.

IN this chapter our blessed Lord introduces himself first of all, in the endearing and suggestive relationship of a shepherd taking care of, and feeding the flock committed to his charge. But lest this figure should not sufficiently express his relationship to his people, he varies it, or rather abandons it for a little; and says, also, "I am the door of the sheepfold," by whom alone the shepherd, the undershepherd, can come to take care of the sheep, and the sinner can enter and have infinite and everlasting joy. He says that all that came before him, that is, all that came pretending to be the Messiah, — for false Christs came, or persons who assumed to be the Messiah, and said they were the Christ, the Son of God, — were deceivers. It was the universal expectancy that a great Deliverer should come at this very crisis; and wherever there is a great expectancy pervading a whole nation, we may expect that evil-minded persons will avail themselves of it, and turn it to their own pecuniary profit, aggrandizement, or power. Now Jesus does not say that all prophets that preceded him, but all that pretended to be what he alone was, were simply thieves and robbers, not entering by the door according to the promises, the prophecies, the types, that went before, but climbing over the wall, thrusting themselves in, and assum-

ing a jurisdiction to which they had no title, and for which they had no fitness. Then he says, "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep;" he that comes in the way publicly and properly is the right shepherd. Just as we say in a common house the door is the place of legal entrance. Seeing a person enter by the door you judge nothing wrong; but seeing a person on a dark night climbing in by the window, or trying to get in by the roof, you would instinctively suspect that he was a thief and a robber. So our Lord says those that come pretending to be the Messiah climbed in surreptitiously: he that is the true Messiah entered by the publicly appointed way, sketched in the pages of the prophets, well known to all that knew the Scriptures; and he only is the Messiah; and "to him the porter openeth." Whether all the imagery can be carried out and applied to specific features in Christ's character I do not know, though some suppose that the porter here is meant to represent the Holy Spirit, making way for the admission into the heart, into the Church, into the world, for Christ Jesus. "To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice." And then "he calleth his sheep by name." In northern countries this seems absurd. You can understand a dog being called by his name, but you cannot conceive the possibility of a sheep being called by his name. But if you will read the accounts of the eastern habits and customs, you will find that the sheep in those warm climates seem to have greater sagacity; at all events, it is matter-of-fact, in the present day, that the shepherd in the East does call each sheep by its name, and when he pronounces that name, the sheep, accustomed to hear it, instantly responds to it; and in eastern countries, instead of driving the sheep before him, as our shepherds do, from the hills — a very fierce way, and a law-like way — the shepherd goes before the flock, and the flock follow him as their guide and their leader to the place to which he is conducting them. These two facts then were true when

this speech or sermon was preached ; and, like most eastern habits, which are very little given to change, it has continued to be true still, and so well do the sheep know the shepherd's voice, that if a stranger were to call the sheep by name they would not follow him. They recognize the accustomed voice, and respond to it. In the case of a dog, if a stranger call him by name, he will not follow him, but if he hear the accustomed voice of the master he instantly recognizes and follows that voice. A man can be more easily discriminated by his voice than by his countenance. The voice has more expression in it, more definiteness in it, than even the appearance of the countenance. And very often one finds, that, when you know not a person by the countenance, owing to the lapse of years, or your having forgotten him, the moment that he speaks to you that moment you know his voice. So there seems to be in the voice of the shepherd something that the dog in our country recognizes, that the sheep in eastern countries easily understand ; and when they hear his voice, they instantly follow him.

Jesus tells them again that he is the door of the sheepfold, and that all that came before him came for wrong purposes, to steal, to kill, and to destroy. He says, "I am the good Shepherd ;" emphatically so, *the* good Shepherd. And I prove that I am so by giving my life for the sheep. Those that come for the fleece, not for the feeding of the flock, those that come to steal, not to tend the sheep, are hirelings ; and when the wolf comes, instead of endeavoring to defend the sheep, and to beat him away, they flee also, and leave the sheep to the mercy of the wolf. This shows us that the shepherd has not only to tend his flock, not only to feed his flock, but also to beat off the wolf, whether that wolf be the Infidel wolf, or the Romish wolf, or the Tractarian wolf, whenever he comes among them. It is the shepherd's duty not only to lead the sheep into the green pastures and by the still waters ; but by every means in his power to beat

off the ruthless aggressor, the wolf, whether in his own skin or in the slain sheep's skin, who comes only to destroy. "I am the good Shepherd." And then, in verse 16, he says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." Now this 16th verse is perhaps one of the unluckiest instances of translation. There are two Greek words used here. One is *αἰλή*, which means "a fold;" and the other is *ποίμνη*, which means "a flock." Now one would think, from reading this verse, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd," that there is to be only one fold. That is not true; the meaning is: if a shepherd has a great number of sheep he has half a dozen folds — what we should call *pens*, or divisions. But the Greek word used in the beginning of the verse, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold," is the word *αἰλή*, which we might render "a pen," or "sheepfold." But the word which is translated "fold" in the latter part of this verse is not *αἰλή*, but *ποίμνη*; and therefore the verse would read, strictly translated, thus: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this pen, or fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd," — many folds, but one flock. The promise, according as our translation reads here, would justify in some degree the Romish dogma, that there ought to be but one universal Church, under one Pope, under one ecclesiastical head, — only one fold. The Papal idea is one fold with the shepherd at the head of it; the Protestant idea is twenty folds, but only one flock; that is, many denominations, but all constituting together, though in separate folds, but one grand flock, belonging to Christ, the true Shepherd.

Our Lord then proceeds to explain that he lays down his life for the sheep; and he uses language in the eighteenth verse so peculiar that no mere man could use it. He says,



“I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” Now that cannot be true of any creature. I have no right to lay down my life; our life is not our own. God may take it when, where, how he pleases; but I have no power to lay it down, and still less have I power to take it up. And therefore, he that had this great power was something greater than life — he was the Lord and the Giver of life, that is, God. There was a division among the Jews when he said so. That expression, I may observe, “This commandment have I received of my Father,” does not at all lessen the effect of what he said; because throughout Christ is the sent of the Father, acting for the Father; that is his office, and the peculiarity of his mission, and not in the least affecting the fact that he was God. “Many of them said, He hath a devil. Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?” Then others said to him, “If thou be the Christ” — that is, the Messiah, prophesied in the Prophets and in the Psalms — “tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you.” He told it to the blind man; he told them again and again he was Christ. And then he tells them that the reason why they did not hear him and believe him, was just that they would not join his flock, and come under his pastoral care and jurisdiction. “My sheep hear my voice.” And then he says in another verse, clearly declarative of Deity, “I give unto them eternal life.” Who is it that says this? Could a man say so, could an angel say so? How can the Unitarian explain such an announcement as this, “I give unto them eternal life?” And not only so, but he says, “And they shall never perish; neither shall any” — not *man*, for man is not in the original — “neither shall any created being pluck them out of my hand.” See how decided is that! Is not that the language of God, is

not that the voice of Deity? can there be a dispute, is it possible to mistake here? The Jews instantly were struck by it. "Jesus said, I and my Father are one." Now the word, "one," is in the neuter gender: "I and my Father are one existence — one being." It does not mean, "I and my Father are united in counsel;" this would be quite a different Greek word. It does not mean, "I and my Father are of the same mind," though that is true; but it is a form of expression so peculiar that it is impossible to arrive at any other inference from it than this, that Jesus said that he and the Father were, in essence, in substance, and in attributes, the same glorious Jehovah. And that this is the natural construction of it is evident from what the Jews did. "The Jews took up stones to stone him." Recollect, stoning, as we read in the Book of Leviticus, was the punishment for blasphemy. When they took up stones to stone him, Jesus said, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?" The Jews answered, "For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." On every occasion when worship was given to Christ, "they worshipped him," he accepted it; but if you will take the case of any good man recorded in the New Testament to whom worship was offered, you will find that in every instance he repudiated it. I will take the former chapter, for instance, when Jesus told the blind man, "I that speak unto thee am he;" the blind man said, "Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." Now take any case in which worship was offered to an apostle. Take Cornelius coming in to the apostle Peter. "And Cornelius fell down and worshipped him." What did Peter say? "Stand up: I myself also am a man." What a contrast is here! Whenever worship was offered to Christ he accepted it; when the shadow of it was offered to an apostle he shrunk from it in horror. Take again the instance in the Book of Revela-

tion, where worship was offered to an angel. "And I fell at his feet to worship him." Now what did the angel say? Did he, like Jesus, accept it? No; but he said, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." Is it possible, then, from this contrast alone, to come to any other conclusion than this, that Christ was God? There is one instance of a man accepting worship in the New Testament, and what an instance! And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost." This contrast alone — and you may carry it through the whole New Testament — is triumphant proof that our blessed Lord was what he assumed to be, God.

Then he argues with them: he says, If magistrates, and kings, and princes are called gods — which they are in the New Testament — will you say that I blaspheme, who am the Son of God? If a ruler be called by so high a name, how much more am I God, who am what I have said I am, the Son of God? The expression is here, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified." The word "sanctify" is calculated to convey to some minds the idea, as if Christ needed sanctification. But you may recollect how I showed you several times in readings on Levitiens, that to sanctify means strictly to separate, to set apart. Hence a person devoted to wickedness is called in the Old Testament a sanctified person; a person devoted to God is also called a sanctified person. The Hebrew adjective, *kadosh*, the Greek word *ἅγιος*, and the Latin word *sacer*, all mean that which is set apart to a specific purpose, whether good or bad. So the word "to sanctify," means simply to set apart, to appoint, to constitute. And hence this text might be read, "Say ye

of him whom the Father hath set apart for this specific purpose, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest?" But if you will not believe me, why then judge of me by my works; and say by them whether I am not what I have said I am, the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, the only Messiah.

Thanks be to God that we can say it; "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ."

## CHAPTER X. 14-27.

IMAGERY.—CHRIST'S GOODNESS.—STRAY SHEEP.—ANIMAL FACES.  
—CHRIST KNOWS HIS OWN.—SYMPATHIZES WITH SECRET SOR-  
ROWS.—CHRIST'S SHEEP ARE HIS BY CHOICE AND PURCHASE.—  
FOLLOW CHRIST.—HOW WE FOLLOW CHRIST.—NUNS.

I HAVE shown how expressive according to Eastern usage is the beautiful figure under which Jesus is represented in the chapter, the previous striking and instructive chapter, that we have explained. In fact, it is but one of the many relationships which Christ sustains to his own, as if all the stores of human speech and all the imagery of human imagination were exhausted in order to set forth the fulness, the glory, and the excellency of Him who is our Prince, our Saviour, our all, and in all. But I do not know a figure more expressive or more beautiful than that under which he is represented in this chapter, namely, the pastoral one; his people represented as the sheep of his pasture, himself in his protecting love as the great, the chief, and the good Shepherd. He calls himself in one of the texts I have selected, "the *good* Shepherd." Perhaps this word is expressive of Deity; just as he said to the young man of old, "There is none good but God;" or, perhaps it is meant to convey the idea of great beneficence; what we call philanthropy, or goodness; and denotes that he laid down his life for the flock; a goodness that carried him to the cross, that bore him through our grave, and that he has taken with him to the right hand of the Father; where, unmindful of our treatment of him when he was one of us, he is mindful only

of our safety and our interests as the sheep of his pasture. In another part of the New Testament he is called the Chief Shepherd: "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Again, he is called the Great Shepherd: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead that Great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant." And in this interesting and endearing manner, all his sheep, however lowly in the valleys of life, or however elevated amid its mountains, whether they be in the dark shadow or in the bright sunshine, whether they be the lambs in the fold or the full-grown sheep, all are under his cognizance, all clearly and constantly before him; so that according to a beautiful parable, in which he uses the same imagery, he misses even one that may have unhappily strayed from the fold. "What man, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one, doth not leave the ninety and nine;" — one would think that out of a hundred he could scarcely miss one; but no sooner does a sheep go astray than the good Shepherd, ever watchful, ever wakeful, the Shepherd of Israel that slumbereth not nor sleepeth, misses even that one sheep, and he does not say, "Oh, it is only one; I have got ninety-nine left; what does it matter?" no; he leaves the ninety and nine that are safe in the fold, and he goes after that lost one; and he does not give up his pursuit nor pause in his inquisitive search until he has found the sheep; and when he has found it what does he do? Does he do like a tyrant master — beat it because it went astray, and then drive it hard home, that it may feel the bitterness of having gone astray? No; his thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways; he lays it on his shoulder, lest it should be fatigued by the toil of its journey, carries it home not scolding it, but rejoicing; and strikes a note in the fold below that reverberates in the choirs above; for there is joy among the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth and returneth unto God.

In this chapter it is stated that he knows them. "I am the good shepherd, and I know my sheep." "I know them." We suppose that there is scarcely any distinction or difference almost between one sheep and another; a person not accustomed to discriminate would never suppose that there was any very perceptible difference between them. But this is a great mistake; it arises from our ignorance. Animal likenesses are as varied, as distinct, as sharply defined as human countenances are; and when you are thoroughly acquainted with sheep or with deer, or other animals, you will soon notice that one has a countenance expressive of one feeling, and another a countenance expressive of another. And an Eastern shepherd by constant communion with his flock comes to know them just as intimately as he knows his own family or his own near friends. Now this beautiful image, or rather this interesting fact, Jesus accepts, and says, "Just as a shepherd knows his sheep, their countenances, and even the different tones and modulations of their bleating, so do I know my people scattered through the whole world; every one of them is as visible before me and is as thoroughly recollected by me as if there were no other sheep in the world but that lonely one that is now astray from its fold." This idea is expressed in other phrases in the Bible in such ways as this, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." He tells the numbers of the stars, he calls them by their name; how much more does he know the sheep of his own pasture. Nay, he knows the very street in which you live, the very number of the door, the very name of the occupant; for twice in the Acts of the Apostles one is commissioned to go to a certain street of a certain city, to a certain door, and find one of a certain name; and there that inhabitant is occupied just as the divine voice declared and predicted he should be found. So minutely is each man known to Christ.

Now it is very important to realize this. This is one of those truths that fall too flat upon those that hear; many receive it as the last paragraph in a morning newspaper; they read it, and then dismiss it from their minds. Let us try to give it a lodgement in our hearts; try to realize it, give the thought hospitality, cherish it, take it home, think of it; and you will derive comfort, guidance, hope, encouragement, motive, strength. The sad fact is that many truths are preached every day in every sermon; which we let pass in at one ear and out at the other, as the wind passes through a ruined archway, creating a little melody in its transit, and leaving dead silence afterwards; we hear it, and think no more of it. Whereas if you could just take out of one sermon one grand truth, such a truth as this, "Thou God seest me;" "the Shepherd knows me, sees me, as clearly as if I were the only individual in the universe" — that recollected thought would be worth your going a thousand miles to hear it; it would be a mine of gold kept, and nursed, and cherished in your hearts; it would be as a seed that would quicken there, and bear much fragrant, and joyous, and holy fruit for many days to come.

But not only does Christ thus know his people, but we can go a step further, and say that he knows also all their circumstances, their condition, and their case. I have said the shepherd knows the sheep by the sound of their bleating, by the shape and the aspect of their countenance; and so our Shepherd knows us. But more than this, a true shepherd knows, and pities, and helps, the sheep that are sickly, those that are lame, those that are with young. How beautifully is it said, "He shall lead his flock like a shepherd; he shall carry in his bosom them that are with young;" or as it is expressed in another interesting instance, where Jacob, speaking to the avaricious and greedy Laban, says, "These twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and



the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee ; I bear the loss of it ; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was ; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night ; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house ” — a shepherd rendering an account of his flock, but with all the features of a human shepherd who had lost some, but still could say that those that remained he had tended, and cared for, and sympathized with, and protected to the utmost of his power. Far more intimately than Jacob knew his sheep, more intimately than the shepherd patriarch knew the sick, the weak, the hungry, the lame, does our great and chief Shepherd of the sheep know his people. He knows that want which nobody else knows but thyself : he knows and he has weighed that burden which nobody feels the weight of save he that bears it ; he has plumbed and fathomed that deep sorrow, that moaning sea of sorrow, which tears refuse to express, and which words cannot give utterance to. He knows it. You are quite mistaken if you think that you have no sympathy. If you have not a resounding echo in a single human heart, you have the deepest, the richest, the most refreshing sympathy in the bosom of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. Let us try to take that other thought with us ; — that not only does he know me as an individual, but he knows my want, my sorrow, my care, my anxiety ; of the most hidden sufferer, the obscurest weeper, the most solitary sorrowful one, he knows the hidden grief, and sympathizes with him, and will, as soon as the tears have freshened the waste places of the spirit, and the sorrow like the dew has saturated the heart's soil and made it fruitful, heal the sorrow, remove the burden, and make the latter days more joyous than the first. What a blessed thought is this ! how worthy of our recollecting, how fitted to encourage, to cheer, to strengthen. And he does it

all not only as God, but also because he is man ; not simply because he is omniscient, omnipresent ; but because, omniscient as he is, omnipresent as he is, he is our Elder Brother. We have not a high-priest who cannot sympathize with us, but one who was in all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin. His sympathy is not lost in his omnipotence ; his humanity is not merged in his deity ; he has feelings as we have ; but he has the power to pour out his feelings in precious currents of sympathy and of love. All this however is restricted to those that he calls his sheep. "I know my sheep." In what sense are they his sheep? How and why are they his? They are so by his free choice of them. He himself tells us, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." That means, you were not the first to choose, I was the first ; and your now choosing me is only the result of my having previously chosen you. His love lighted upon us before we loved him ; his grace touched us before we responded. We are his therefore by his own free and sovereign choice. We are his because we are a gift to him. "Thine," he says, "they were, and thou gavest them me." Again, he says, "Behold, I, and the children thou hast given me." Just as a proprietor of sheep intrusts all the folds and all the flocks to the shepherd he engages, so the everlasting Father has committed his people to Christ's care, to be washed in his precious blood, to be tended by his pastoral care, and to be made meet for leaving the shattered folds below, exposed to the incursions of the wolf, for the heavenly and glorious flock that is above. And we are not only his by this choice, but we are his also by being his property. "Ye are not your own," he says, "but ye are bought with a price ; not with gold and silver, but with the precious blood of a Lamb without spot and without blemish." If we be Christ's sheep, we are chosen by him. We cannot penetrate the secret of that, and read the decree that chooses us ; but we can open the book that is

the transcript of it, and see by our character if we are Christ's sheep. We are the Father's gift to him, and lastly we are purchased by his own precious blood.

But in order, therefore, to keep us right, and to enable us to ascertain if we be his sheep, that is, if we be Christians, we find certain traits laid down; and the very first is, "My sheep know me," or, "I am known of them." "My sheep hear my voice, and a stranger's voice they will not follow." Sheep recognize in eastern countries the voice of the shepherd; and if they were properly trained here, they would probably do the same. The degeneracy of many of our animals arises from bad treatment. We read in Scripture of princes riding on white asses; the ass in eastern countries, and in Spain, at this day, is a beautiful animal, a high-spirited animal, full of vigor, beauty, and usefulness. But in our country, because he is degraded, he becomes more and more degenerate. And so in the same manner other animals lose the instincts that they had by the treatment they receive. If our sheep were cared for by the shepherd more, they too might know his voice. But this is now true in the East, and what is implied in the imagery of that sermon is strictly descriptive of our relationship to Christ. A believer does know Christ's voice. I do not say that every Christian is a great theologian; I do not say that every communicant is a Christian; I do not say that every baptized person is a Christian; but I do say that every true Christian when he hears a sermon preached can say whether that sermon be the echo of Christ's voice; whether the chord of the Redeemer's voice runs through it; whether it be, to use a modern expression, a Gospel sermon or not. They that do know the Gospel, they that are truly converted men, can distinguish; and if all men were Christians, then all men would choose invariably for their ministers, where they have the power, only Christian men to minister to them. And it is very remarkable too, that wherever there is some-

thing in this Gospel not only that is known by God's people but there is a music in it so singularly its own, that let the Gospel be faithfully preached by a man that feels it — not eloquently, not powerfully, but earnestly and truly — and he will never be without an audience to listen to him. You may depend upon it that wherever there is not an audience — there may not be a crowd — but wherever there is not an audience to listen, there is something wrong in him that speaks, either in his manner, or seriously in his matter. The promise is absolute, “I, if I am lifted up, will draw all men unto me.” As we read the Gospel, we find that the Pharisees scoffed at Christ, that the Sadducees derided him, but that it is added, “the common people heard him gladly;” meaning that there was a power in the preaching of the truth that the great unsophisticated masses were not able to resist. And if we indeed be Christians, you may hear in a sermon sometimes bad grammar, sometimes a badly turned sentence, not the most eloquent expression, or the most beautiful imagery; Christians look for something above all that; and if we find in that sermon Christ's voice, if we find in its truths living bread, if we find in its words living streams from the fountain of life, we shall forgive all the bad rhetoric and all the defects of grammar, and be thankful that an under shepherd, commissioned by the chief Shepherd, speaks to us the words of everlasting life.

“My sheep know my voice;” and it is added as the next feature, and one not less worthy of noticing, and by which you can ascertain if you be the sheep of Christ, namely, that they follow him. The shepherd precedes the flock; in our country the shepherd drives the flock. We treat the sheep as if they were folded on Mount Sinai; the Eastern shepherd treats them as if they were amid the green pastures and the still waters of Zion. The Eastern shepherd precedes, and the sheep follow; so our great Shepherd precedes and we also follow. And if you open the New Testa-

ment, especially the Book of Revelation, you will find it laid down as the mark of Christ's people: "These are they that follow the Lamb." "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." Thus, if we be Christ's sheep, we not only hear his voice, appreciate his word, distinguish his truth from all other truth whatever, but are refreshed by it, and rejoice in it; and the truth received into the intellect changes the heart, and shapes and gives tone to the life, and therefore we follow Christ. In what respects do we follow Christ? — and by ascertaining that, we also ascertain the tests and criteria of true Christianity. We follow Christ in one grand feature, his ceaseless reference to the written word. Whenever a question was put to him, his answer was always, "Have ye not read?" "What say the Scriptures?" "How readest thou?" "Search the Scriptures." I know nothing more instructive than Christ's answering almost every question, not from the depths of his own infinite wisdom, as he might have done, but from a text in his own inspired book. We, too, if we are following Christ, shall follow him in this respect. We shall believe a truth, not upon a pope's *dictum* or a council's authority, nor a minister's opinion nor a synod's decision, but on this ground only, "Thus saith the Lord." The truth that has not "Thus saith the Lord" embosoming it, may be a very scientific one, a very useful one, but it is not a vital and a saving one; and we cannot accept — our souls are too precious — we cannot accept any man's opinion on matters that relate to our everlasting well-being, instead of the decision of Him whose word is truth. If, therefore, my dear friends, you want the way to heaven, follow Christ by referring to the Bible: if you want to know, "What must I do to be saved?" imitate Christ's appealing to the Bible by searching the Scriptures. This is a precious trait in him that we are to follow.

His sheep follow him in his intercourse with the world. I know nothing more striking than Christ's intercourse with

the world. He did not live in a hermitage or a monastery, and fling forth truths from its recesses to the crowd outside ; but he mixed with the world, he sat at the Publican's table, he appeared in the crowded thoroughfare ; wherever an ear would listen, there was Jesus to speak forth the words of everlasting life. The beautiful distinction in his life was this ; he was in the world, but he was not of the world ; he never forgot, at any point of contact with the world, that he was an ambassador from God, a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. This very fact — that Jesus mixed with the world, met the world foot to foot, entered into all its pursuits that were not frivolous or positively wicked, and there tried to make the world better — is the most striking rebuke on *monkery* and asceticism that one can possibly conceive. There was nothing of the ascetic in Christ's life, nothing of the recluse ; one dressed like the world, speaking like the world, weeping like the world, rejoicing like the world, and yet infinitely above it, though subject to all the sorrows, the infirmities, the weaknesses, the illnesses, the faintness, the hunger and thirst of the world ; always in it, never of it, speaking to it and leaving a benediction wherever he found a footing. Such was Christ, and such is the example that we are to follow ; and that example should teach us, therefore, that we are to be in the world, not to go out of it, in order to be Christian. I have often been amazed how any one can justify a monk's or a nun's decision. If a nun be a very Christian woman, of all persons upon earth the world has the greatest need of her ; and instead of going out of it, it is a call to her to remain in it. But if she be not a Christian, she ought to seek after sanctifying influence in spite of it ; but if she go into a convent, it is very unlikely that she will catch many sanctifying influences there. And it does seem to me, therefore, that a mother teaching her children, or a lady going from house to house as a district visitor, and endeavoring to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, is a sub-

limer and nobler spectacle — certainly more like that of the blessed Master — than that of a recluse or a nun, dressed in a style the most grotesque, not Christian because it is grotesque, — denying herself wholesome food, and feeding upon bitter and unwholesome herbs, which can be no sanctification to the soul, whilst it must be the shortening of life, and great torment to the body; and least of all is she like Christ in hiding her light under a bushel, instead of bringing it out into the street, that they that walk in darkness may be benefited by it. What common sense is there in every page of the Bible! what a perfect and beautiful character was our blessed Lord! what a grand example of what is best for a man and most holy in the sight of God!

We are to follow him in his joys. Jesus often wept, but, it is singular enough, it is not once said he smiled. It is said he rejoiced; and it is said he rejoiced for the joy set before him. On one occasion Jesus rejoiced in spirit; but he was never seen to smile. He was emphatically the Man of Sorrows. I do not say that joy in us is sinful. But he had joy. But there are different kinds of joy. There is a joy that is natural. If you have got a sudden accession to your wealth, to your comfort, to your position, you may rejoice — that is not sinful; nothing that is natural is sinful; it is what is contrary to nature, or injurious to nature, that is sinful. On the other hand, there is a joy that is devilish. The devils rejoice when schemes of wickedness are crowned with success. Such joy is forbidden. And there is the last joy that rises to a higher level — the joy that Christ had — joy at the conversion of souls, at the spread of his kingdom, at the lengthening of its cords and the strengthening of its stakes, and that the travail of his soul was about to be crowned with an abundant blessing. This joy we should drink into yet more, and follow him in cherishing it. We should follow him, too, in his sorrow. Jesus had the sorrow of a man, he had a sorrow that was perfectly human. It is

said he wept at the grave of Lazarus. That weeping was not the weeping that was peculiar to him, but the weeping that every one has. Sorrow is the heirloom of every family; its melancholy records are on the tapestry of noble halls, as much as on the damp floors of the lowly and the afflicted poor. It is absurd to say to a person who is mourning over the loss of a relative or a friend, "Do not weep; it is not right to weep." Such advice is worse than the ordinary commonplace consolation. It is quite right that we should weep; they cannot help weeping; and there is no sin in weeping. The rule that regulates it is, to "weep as though you wept not," feeling that there are things to be wept for far more sorrowful than bereavements, and losses, and crosses. Jesus had sorrow, that was the sorrow of a man; but he had a sorrow that we cannot follow him in—the sorrow that he felt as he trod the wine-press alone; the sorrow that was atoning and expiatory, the sorrow that ended in his atoning death and meritorious sacrifice: in that he was alone. Even the virgin mother's tears might not mingle with those tears. He must weep in this matter alone, and he receives the glory alone as the only Saviour and sacrifice.

Are we then his sheep? Do we show that we are, by exhibiting, however dimly, these tests of the Christian character? The likeness of Christ, at first, will be like the engraving upon steel or upon copper; it will be first faint, but as days accumulate, it will become deeper, sharper, more defined, more distinct. Have you these traits, these marks, these engravings, it may be at present faint, but still there? If they be there they will be deepened, until they are the full likeness of Christ Jesus. And if you be his people, how blessed the thought! "I give unto them eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand." "I give unto them eternal life." Can I fail to believe in the perseverance of saints after reading that? Once a Christian (I say it having clearly before me the misconstructions that may be put upon



it) — once a Christian, a Christian for ever. Regenerated to-day, you cannot be unregenerated to-morrow. It is impossible that a man can be a child of God to-day, and a child of Satan to-morrow. He may profess to be one to-day, and give up his profession to-morrow; but he has given up a profession, not a reality. Wherever there is a true sheep, a true believer, that believer has eternal life, Christ's free gift, and none shall pluck him out of Christ's hand. Neither life nor death, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold him so strongly, but because he holds us so fast. It is Christianity that holds us, not we that hold Christianity. If it depended upon us, we should perish in twenty-four hours; but as it depends upon the faithful promise, the unfaltering love, the grasp of Omnipotence, the sympathy of a Brother, therefore we have eternal life, and none shall pluck us out of his hand.

And, as if this imagery of the shepherd and the sheep were not peculiar to earth, it is transferred to heaven. The most beautiful picture of saints in glory is a pastoral one, and the very reading of it is the richest and the most striking eloquence. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

May we be in that happy group, in that blessed fold, for Christ's sake!

NOTE. — These opening verses (to verse 5) set forth the distinction between false and true shepherds. Then (verses 7, 8, 9) he brings in himself as the door by which both shepherds and sheep enter the fold. Then (verse 10) he returns to the imagery of the first verses, and sets forth himself as the good shepherd; and the rest (to verse 18) is occupied with the results and distinctions dependent on that fact. τὴν αὐτὴν ὁ περιτετευχισμένος κ. ὑπαυθρος τόπος (Phavorinus, Lucke, ii. 403), just answering — except in this being a permanent inclosure — to our “fold.” This fold is the visible Church of God, primarily, as his people Israel were his peculiar fold; afterwards the fold comprehends all the faithful. The terms in this first part are general, and apply to all leaders of God’s people; in verse 1, to those who enter that office without having come in at the door (*i. e.* Christ, in the large sense in which the O. T. faithful looked to and trusted in him as the covenant promise of Israel’s God); and in verse 2, to those who do enter this way; and whosoever does, is a shepherd of the sheep, (not *the* Shepherd, as E. V., see verse 11). The sheep throughout this parable are not the mingled multitude of good or bad, but the real sheep, the faithful, who are what all in the fold should be. The false sheep (goats, Matt. xxv. 32) do not appear; for it is not the character of the flock, but that of the Shepherd, and the relation between him and his sheep, which is here prominent.

[3.] Perhaps the *θυρωρὸς*, the porter, should not be too much pressed as significant; but certainly the Holy Spirit is especially he who opens the door to the shepherds. See frequent uses of this symbolism by the Apostles, Acts xvi. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 9; 2 Cor. ii. 12; Col. iv. 3; and instances of the *θυρωρὸς* shutting the door, Acts xvi. 6, 7. — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER XI.

LAZARUS SICK. — MARTHA AND MARY. — BETHANY. — PUBLICATION OF GOOD DEEDS. — THE APPEAL OF THE SISTERS. — JESUS MAN AS WELL AS GOD. — DELAY NOT DENIAL. — DEATH A SLEEP. — CHARACTERS. — SHORT AND SUBLIME CREED. — SECRET OF CHRIST'S SORROW.

THIS truly interesting chapter is too long for the necessarily cursory exposition which one can here give. We read in the previous chapter but one, of the blind man whose eyes he opened; and in this chapter we have an allusion to it, as a fact that ought to have proved, as they thought, that he who could open the eyes of the blind might have prevented the death of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and her sister Martha. The chapter opens by mentioning that "a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany;" and the evangelist adds, as if it were the most beautiful and lasting characteristic of Bethany, that it was "the town of Mary and her sister Martha." No doubt, that little village was signalized for other things than for being the residence of these two Christian women; but in all probability the good works they had done had so honored it, the good they had spread had been so great, the poor they had aided, the suffering they had sympathized with, had been so deeply and so extensively felt and appreciated, that the town came to be no longer the town of this conqueror, or of that poet, or of that painter, or of that sculptor, but the town of two whose names were on no tablets upon earth, but were written in the Lamb's Book of Life — the town of Mary and of her sister Martha. We find in the second verse a reference

to an incident connected with Mary: "It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick." Thus the good deeds that Christians do by grace may be justly published, for we have here a precedent for doing so. Many people speak as if to tell in any shape what you have done were necessarily to boast of the good you have done; but it is not so. One man may keep silent on the good that he has done, because he is too proud to tell it; another man may speak of the good that he has done because it will contribute to the glory of his Master, and to the benefit of souls. It does not necessarily follow, that to publish what you have done is to boast of it. There may be that end, that may be the motive; but it is not always or necessarily so; and the charity of the Gospel leads us never to impute a bad or a specious motive, when we can by any possibility impute a good, a holy, and a Christian one.

"Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." They told Jesus of the fact; and the argument on which they based their appeal to Jesus, and their hope and expectation of his interference, was, "He whom thou lovest is sick." One would have thought they would have said, "He who loveth thee is sick;" as if his love to Christ would be a reason for Christ responding to it by saving him from a sick-bed. But the sisters knew better; they knew Christ; and they felt, wisely and justly felt, as the sequel proves, that Christ's love to Lazarus was a stronger inducement to Christ to interfere than any love that Lazarus could have to him. We are so strong, not because we love him, but because he first in his sovereignty loved us. And therefore they touched a chord that they knew would vibrate in the bosom of the sympathizing Son of Man, when they said to him in simple but most significant words, "He whom thou lovest is sick." That was enough. When Jesus heard it he said, without

promising to come, "This sickness is not unto death;" that is, will not be a final and fatal one; but it is in another respect for the glory of God, that I, the Son of God, may be glorified thereby. And then it is added, that Jesus not only loved Lazarus, the brother that was sick, but "he loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." And this love, I believe, that he bore, was not simply the love that is divine, but the love also that is human. We must never forget that our blessed Lord, whilst he was God, was always and everywhere the perfect man; and the three friends that he seems to have had, to whose homestead he came, under whose hospitable roof he frequently sat, and talked of the things of the kingdom, were Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. If Jesus had only set before us the instance of a divine life, there would have been omitted from his character one feature that we now see consecrated in him; namely, the love of friend to friend as well as the love of God to man. He was the friend of these three, as well as their Saviour also. But in the sixth verse it seems at first very surprising, "When he had heard, therefore, that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was." This expression applied to Jesus seems as if he hesitated, or was reluctant to go and heal him who was sick. But he had another end in view. It was necessary he should wait those two days, that Lazarus might die; and thus the Jews should see, not a resurrection of a dying man from a sick-bed, but the resurrection of a dead man from his stony sepulchre. We must not, therefore, always construe delay as refusal. This delay of two days was not denial. We sometimes think, if we ask special mercies of God, and do not receive them for weeks, for months, for years, that he has not heard us. But that may be a great mistake. He has heard, and he is about to bestow the mercy, not always in the shape in which you asked it, but in the shape which he sees and knows will be most expedient for you.

Our Lord then said to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The disciples thought that he meant sleep, and they said, "Well, if that be all, it is all very satisfactory; we are quite sure that he will awake refreshed." "Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death; but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." How beautiful is that figure under which death is set before us — a sleep! not insensibility, as some think death to be. I do not believe that in the deepest sleep we are insensible. We forget when we wake what we have been thinking of when we were asleep; but I have not the least doubt that when the body is sound asleep, refreshed and invigorated by its slumbers, the mind, the un-sleeping sentinel, is walking the country in which it was the day before, or the sanctuary in which it was the Sunday before, or among the scenes of boyhood. I do not believe that the mind is ever in a state of torpor, or that it ever ceases to be conscious. Sometimes you recollect awake what you have been thinking of asleep; what seem like dreams are simply the mind thinking, meditating, recollecting, suggesting. And I have no doubt that the mind, instead of being stupid or in torpor when we are asleep, is in its most vigorous state. I know that I have thought on subjects when asleep, and had dim recollections of them afterwards, far more magnificent and beautiful than ever I had when awake. And in proportion as the soul grows distinct from, and independent of, the outer machinery of the body by which it is oppressed and shut down, it becomes more vigorous, more clear in its vision, more healthy in its imaginings, more powerful in its action, and more capable of intercourse with the spiritual world. Sleep, therefore, is not insensibility. The body lies down in the grave, and like the body in bed, it there sleeps: but the soul, separate from the body in the grave as it is from the body in bed at night

and asleep, is active, conscious, awake, in full communion and fellowship and intimacy with God the Maker. I do not know any thing that reminds one of death more than sleep. I have a feeling — it may be imaginary — that when I am awake I have a hold of my life; but when I lie down to sleep, I let go my life, and can grasp it no more; I can then only lay my heart on the Shepherd of Israel, who slumbereth not nor sleepeth. So in the grave the body will be helpless; the soul, however, will be free; and what we call dying is really and truly only beginning to live an unfettered and unshackled life.

When Jesus came he heard that he had lain in the grave four days. It is stated that “many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.” And as soon as Martha heard of Jesus coming to them, she ran out to meet him; but Mary sat still in the house. It would be a very interesting study for you just to refer to every passage in the Gospel where Martha and Mary are alluded to; and you will notice how thorough is the identity of each character throughout. You are always sure that it has either been a very master mind that has conceived a romance, or it is one that took from a living and actual original, when you see the characters in incidental circumstances always and everywhere retaining what is called their identity. You find Martha ever the active, vigorous, busy housewife; you find Mary always the meditating Christian and devoted student. And in every instance where they are spoken of, there is something said, some slight touch, that shows you it is the same Mary and the same Martha from the beginning to the end. When Martha saw Jesus, she said to him, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

Mark the faith that was in this, and notice the frailty that was in it also. “If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;” as much as to say, “Thy love to him was so

great, and thy power as a physician so divine, that thou wouldst have raised him up to health. But then it needed thy personal presence ;” not knowing that the arm of Jesus can stretch from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven. She had faith in his love, confidence in his power ; but she did not believe that a word spoken at a distance could heal the sick or raise the dead. “ But,” she adds, “ I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her,” in simple words, “ Thy brother shall rise again ;” a grand and blessed truth, that never dawned upon the world till Christ taught it. And Martha, who had been well taught by him, said, “ I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” She looked for a resurrection. “ Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life.” What an announcement ! The very life of all is in me. My word shall penetrate every grave ; my power shall touch the cold ashes in every tomb, and all the dead of six thousand years, myriads upon myriads ; some whose only winding-sheet is the sand of the desert, some whose requiem has been sung only by the waves of the desert sea ; some that have been devoured by the beasts of the field or the fishes of the deep ; some buried under bronze or under green sods, some by the highways, and some scattered to the four winds of heaven ; some slain and buried at the Alma, and in the Crimea : Jesus will speak, and every atom of the scattered dust will be instinct with life, and receive its own polarity ; and we shall rise again, this mortal clothed with immortality, this corruptible clothed with incorruptibility. When he said, “ I am the resurrection and the life,” he either blasphemed, or he was what we know he is, the mighty God, the Prince of peace. “ He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” A believer shall never die ; he shall never see spiritual death ; and death to a believer is not annihilation or extinction, as I



have said, but transition, change of state, and no more. And then he said, "Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." That is an ample creed. He that can repeat that creed, not with his lips or with his intellect, but with his living heart, is a true and orthodox Christian. "I believe that thou art the anointed Messiah, the Son of God" — that is, God — "which should come into the world." When she had so said, she went her way, and found Mary meditative, studious, or reading, and said to her secretly, "The Master is come and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly," threw aside her studies, whatever they were, "and came unto him."

The Jews came to comfort Mary and Martha in their sorrow, because of the death of their brother. They were good neighbors; they sympathized with the sorrows of those that were near them; wherever there was a neighbor that suffered there was one to comfort and to sympathize with that sufferer. Wherever consolation is needed, there consolation should be given; and if you know of a sufferer of any sort, you should feel that it is your privilege to go and comfort that sufferer, not with coarse and commonplace consolations, but with a text from the Bible, with a truth from the Gospel. "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him," just as her sister Martha had said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping, "he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." What was the cause of this? Literally, "he moaned in his heart, he was disturbed in his spirit." Why? Not for the loss of Lazarus, because he was about to raise him again; but, no doubt, he moaned in his heart and was troubled in his spirit, when he saw the terrible havoc that sin had wrought; the long

procession of the dead from Adam's day till then, and from then till the day in which we now live ; and when he saw how many fair flowers death had cut down, how many bright homes he had darkened, how many ties he had snapped in sunder — when he saw all this, Jesus moaned and was troubled. There is added one beautiful text — evidence of his true humanity, his real brotherhood, the intensity of his friendship and his love — a text most eloquent, full of truth, suggestive of many sermons, — it is — “ Jesus wept.”

## CHAPTER XI. 39.

REMOVAL OF GRAVE-STONE. — MEANS AND MIRACLE. — DOUBTS UNREASONABLE. — HUMILITY. — GOD'S GLORY. — CHRIST'S MIRACLES, AND THOSE OF THE APOSTLES. — GOD'S PROVINCE AND MAN'S. — EFFECTS OF THE MIRACLE. — EXPEDIENCY. — CHURCH UNITY. — DECAY OF THE MOSLEM. — RETURN OF JEWS. — SIGNS OF END.

It was remarked, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Jesus, inattentive or regardless rather of the remark that they made, captious in its nature as to what his powers were, gives the commission, "Take ye away the stone." The grave of Lazarus was a cavity in a rock; against that cavity, as may be seen from remaining tombs at Petra at this day, a very massive stone was rolled. The stone Jesus commands those that stood by to take away. This was done, first of all, that there might be no possibility of the suspicion of collusion, imposition, or of any misinterpretation of what Jesus was just about to do. The grave was laid open; the dead, lying still and cold and silent in its recess, was visible to all; and they must see therefore that there was no trick, as the Scribes and Pharisees would be disposed to imagine, but that all was done by the presence of One, who preserves the living and can quicken the dead. There was another reason. What ordinary means can do, extraordinary power is not summoned to effect. He might have made Lazarus come forth at once in resurrection beauty from the tomb, and the stone of itself roll away; but what the human arm can do, Omnipotence does not do.

God does not supersede, but strengthen human effort, in its own province, and in the exercise of its own legitimate power. Whenever God is about to do a miraculous work, man seems to delight in giving expression to objections. Martha makes the remark, "It is absurd to roll away the stone; the body is now," she said, "undergoing corruption, and therefore we had better not roll away the stone. And as to the idea of finding him alive," as she thought Jesus imagined, "the thing is absurd; the body is going to decay; there is no chance of his being alive; it is of no use rolling away the stone; he will rise at the last day, — but live now, that is out of the question." Thus we find her interposing her scepticism, yet a scepticism that confirms the truth, by trying to prevent a great work that should manifest the greatness and power of Jesus. How deplorable is the state of the dead, as here described! This exquisite organization of ours, so fearfully and wonderfully made, must in a few days go to ruin, have the worm its sister, and corruption its mother, so that they that loved it most must bury it out of their sight, and hide it from the eyes of all mankind. Jesus meekly and gently rebuked the unbelief of Martha, when he said, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" That word, "said unto thee," ought to have been sufficient to scatter all unbelief from the bosom of Martha, and to enable her, in spite of nature's impossibilities, to see new scope for the display of Omnipotence, and another trophy for the word of the Son of God. "Said I not unto thee?" Was not that enough for you, Martha? Why should your doubts be felt, when you have my word in your memory and before you? She thought she was humble, perhaps, in thinking so. We often think that scepticism or unbelief is humility; it is really not so. To believe Christ's word is true humility; to disbelieve it is the very essence of infidelity, scepticism, and pride. Jesus states what was the great object and

scope of this miracle: he says, "That thou shouldest see the glory of God." His raising Lazarus from the dead was incidentally to fill up a gap in a happy family, but it was directly and ultimately to manifest the glory of God. The beneficence that the sisters felt by the restoration of a dead brother was only an incident in the grand transaction that manifested the glory, the power, the love, the condescension of God.

Jesus then, we are told, "lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." He lifted up his eyes. They accused him of doing his miracles by an inspiration from beneath; he lifted up his eyes to show that his communion was with an influence from above. And he says, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." They accused him of blasphemy because he said, "I am the Son of God." At the moment, you observe, when his word is clothing itself in a stupendous deed of omnipotence, he says, "Father;" that is to say, in his power acknowledging himself the Son of God, acknowledging God his Father, the very thing for which they took up stones to stone him; and the Father here, by a deed of omnipotent power, admitting that he was what he assumed to be — the Son of God. But how remarkable! our Saviour expresses thanks to the Father for hearing what he had just asked. He says, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me." But Lazarus was not yet raised: how then could he say, "thou hast heard me?" Because we are told, "I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe." He used this form of petition, not because necessary, but because it taught the people God's relationship to him and his relationship to God, and proved by a deed that that relationship was real. "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." Why with a loud voice? When we are extremely aroused, we are apt to speak aloud; or it may have been with a loud

voice because he wished all distinctly to hear, that there might be no mistake that the coming forth of the dead Lazarus was a response to the bidding of the living Christ there present. Let us observe the language he employs. He says, "Lazarus, come forth." He does not say, "Lazarus, revive," as if Lazarus had been in a state of suspended being; but, "Lazarus, come forth," implying that the soul of Lazarus, separated from his body, was living, conscious, and within the sound of the voice of Him whom all things obey. And the instant that he said, "Come forth," that instant the departed soul came forth from the realms of space, took possession of its bodily tenement of clay; and raised, revived, resuscitated, glorious with life, Lazarus came forth, ready to mingle again with the ranks of living men. What an evidence is there here of the finger and the presence of God! I need no other miracle to prove Deity than this. He did not say, "In the name of another, come forth;" but he said in his own name, expressing his own will, exercising his own unborrowed authority, "Lazarus, come forth."

When an apostle wrought miracles, he always did them in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, because his was a delegated authority; but when Jesus wrought a miracle, he spoke on his own authority: and that single contrast is to me decisive, if there were no other proof, that the apostle, however exalted, was a man — that the Messiah, however lowly he looked, was the mighty God, the Prince of Peace.

"And he that was dead," we are told, "came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin," just as he had been laid by those that placed him in the grave. "Jesus said unto them, Loose him and let him go. Again we see that where human hands are sufficient, a divine hand does not interfere. He might not only have quickened his dead heart, and set into circulation the lifeblood; but the same word might have carried

on its wings a power equal to the removal of the bandages and sear cloths of the tomb. But it did not. Lazarus, after being raised, had the napkin taken from his face, the bandages from his hands and feet, that he might walk and move. So that there is a province in all God's dealings, and in every part of his economy, where man can do something, and there is a province where man can do nothing. In disease man can do a great deal; he can remove all the irritating elements that may injure; he may apply precious balms and bandages that may tend to protect and defend; but man cannot give that inner life to the broken limb, that restorative power to the diseased part, that will make it whole as it was before. And so, in the Church of Christ, there is a part where the minister can do something. He can sympathize, he can preach, he can distribute the bread and wine at the communion table, he can sprinkle water on the brow; but he cannot regenerate the heart, he cannot sanctify and light up the soul. There is a province where the minister can do much, there is a province where the minister can do nothing; and the instant you try to step into God's province out of your own, you do mischief and no possible good. So that we shall find, in all God's dealings with man, there is a province in which we can do much; and if we do not fulfil what devolves upon us in that province, whether God do it or not, we have no right to expect that he will do what is his prerogative. The farmer, for instance, sows the seed in spring — that is his province; but God makes that seed germinate and bud, and gives showers, and sunshine, and fertility to the soil — that is God's province. But if man do not sow the seed, there will be no harvest; if God do not bless the budding of the seed, there will be no harvest. There is a terrestrial work where man can do much; there is a celestial work where man can do nothing. Let us do what is ours in his strength, thankful for it; but let us never forget to seek from him the exercise

of what is his, without which Paul may plant, and Apollos water, and all shall yet be in vain.

“Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.” No wonder that they thus believed on Him who could raise the dead. But how must the Sadducees have been startled! First, the Sadducees were a sect that denied the resurrection. They held that it was absurd nonsense that a dead body could ever be raised from the grave. What a thrilling refutation of their creed was this fact, more eloquent than argument, that one body has died, and by a word been thus raised from the dead! Its influence upon the Pharisees was of another description. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection, but then they saw that this was a proof that Jesus was what he professed to be, the Messiah. In the ninth chapter of this Gospel, you will recollect how they cavilled because he had opened the eyes of one who was born blind. Throughout the whole of that chapter the Pharisees endeavored, with all the subtilty and sophistry of consummate ecclesiastics, to prove that Jesus had not opened the man’s eyes, that the man was not born blind, that his sight could not have been given by Jesus; and even when the man told them the simple facts, they could not, because they would not, believe. Well now, instead of finding a man’s eyes opened who was born blind, they find a man’s life restored after he had been acknowledged to be dead, and the fingers of death had begun to taint and to touch the earthly tenement. They must therefore have been more startled than ever, and have had impressed upon them the irresistible and irrefragable conviction that Jesus Christ was God, the only Messiah. “Some of the Jews went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.” They went out of spite, but though they went out of spite, they were nevertheless thereby led to proclaim the deed that proved who Jesus was. Now, the moment that



the chief priests heard of it, "they gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles." What an awful sentiment is here! He does miracles. They had carped and cavilled; but now they find it no longer possible to deny that he did supernatural work, which God alone could do.

Now, the proper conclusion that they ought to have come to from the miracles was, "This is the Messiah; this is the great Prophet that should come into the world; this is the Son of God, the Prince of Peace, the mighty God, the Father of the age to come." But instead of that, with all the enmity with which their hearts were instinct, they plotted and schemed to put to death him who was the Lord of life, the great Messiah. When they put the question, "What shall we do?" in the council, they concluded that "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." Now, they did not say, "He is the Messiah, and proves himself to be so, therefore we will admit him to be so;" but, satisfied that he had credentials that they could not dispute, and that he was accompanied by deeds that demonstrably proved that he was the Son of God, they said, "Now it is quite plain we can argue no more; we have no case or reason on our side; but if we let him alone he will gain power, the Romans will be exasperated, and they will come and take away our nation." They acted on what is called expediency, always a false mode of action. They thought, "If we let him alone, he will gain such power that the Romans will be enraged, and they will see a rival to Cæsar; and they will come and sweep away our name and nation." And, therefore, they took steps to prevent this; but the very steps they took to prevent the nation's being swept away, became in the end the very steps which precipitated its doom the more speedily. We may always be assured that the path of principle is always expedient; that

the path of expediency is rarely so. Principle is always expedient; expediency which is not principle is the most inexpedient thing in the world. Follow what is right, and then expediency will shine upon your footsteps; follow what is profitable, plausible, popular, agreeable, at the expense and sacrifice of principle, and you will miss the end you have in view, and you will injure your own soul and safety at the same time. The Jews, in attempting to avert what they feared as a calamity, did what brought that calamity upon them and theirs — a crushing load to this very day. “And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all.” He was evidently vain, conceited, self-confident; for the high-priest of the Jews had miserably degenerated; the office was given to the highest bidder, to the wealthiest competitor, or to the person that had the greatest influence at court. And he said, “You do not consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” Now, this seems a very remarkable sentiment, and there was a great deal of truth in it. I think he meant, “You do not see that it is better to kill this man, in order that we may avert the doom of the whole nation.” But when he said so, he breathed an unconscious prophecy. He announced a truth, the extent of which and the range of which he did not see. He said, “It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” What a just sentiment! the idea of atonement clearly in it; but a very different atonement he looked for from that which was about to be made. And here John adds, “This spake he not of himself: but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.” Now, it has been asserted by the members of the Church of Rome, that the high-priest in virtue of his office spoke truth, though a bad and corrupt man; that, therefore, the Church may be in its morals most

corrupt, and yet in its doctrine may not be wrong notwithstanding. But it is not here taught that the high-priest, inspired by God, uttered a prophecy as Isaiah did; but that, in uttering his own sentiment that one man whom he supposed to be a criminal should be sacrificed, lest the nation should perish, he unintentionally and undesignedly announced a truth that was in itself divine, scriptural, and true. He spoke not of himself; it was overruled by God to express a divine and a blessed truth, namely, that one man, that is, Jesus, should die for the people. Then John adds, "And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

What a beautiful thought is here!—Christianity first overflowing the national cistern, spreading its bright waves over every land;—"not for that nation only, but for all God's children scattered abroad, that he should gather them into one." See the effect of the preached Gospel—gathering people into one. See, secondly, the true unity of the Church of Christ; not unity in form, not unity in discipline, not unity in government, but unity with one head, the Lord Jesus Christ. The unity of the Church is most admirably kept in its forms by the Church of Rome. She has one ecclesiastical head, and all differences in discipline, in orders, are forgiven on condition that they all be gathered together, looking to the chair of St. Peter, the vicar of Christ. This is just the true Church brought down to earth, materialized, lowered, distorted. The true Church is all Christians, whatever be their differences in discipline, looking to one head, that is, Christ. "That he should gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." And so, in conformity to the nature of the dispensation in which we live, what is the Gospel doing now? Not evangelizing the whole earth, but gathering out of the world a people for Christ. It is very remarkable that the preaching of the blessed Gospel

among all nations is for a witness; and then shall the end come. It is to bring a people out of the world. I do not expect, nor does any one, that by the preaching of the Gospel every one will be converted. We see it as a matter-of-fact that it is not so, and there is no promise that it will be so before Christ come. We are now preaching for God's people scattered abroad — that is, speaking the Gospel to all; but only here and there, one, two, and three believe, are saved, and are happy. And what signs do we see at this moment that this Gospel has been preached to all nations, and that the end is about to come? The ruin of the Turkish empire, as a religious power, is now, if not accomplished, just at our doors. How clearly has the Euphrates been drying up! The last scattered pools are in the channel, the last drops are there; by and by there will be its dry channel, and there and then will be heard the signal tread of God's ancient ones, gathered from all the ends of the world, marching in an exodus, in comparison of which their first exodus from Egypt to Israel was mean, and poor, and paltry. And while these things are taking place upon the earth, let us learn how true God's word is; let us see God in the providential government of the world, and that he who quickens the dead, and also inspired the Scripture, reigneth. "The Lord reigneth" is just as true this very day as it was when it was first written: and we can see God's hand in the world just as we can read God's word in the Bible. God is not shut up in the Bible, but he is acting in the world; and every day he is translating what is written in the word of the Bible into what is done in the world of providence.

May we be of those that are gathered together unto Him! and unto his name be glory, and thanksgiving, and praise.

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NOTE. — [24.] She understands the words rightly, but gently repels the insufficient comfort of his ultimate resurrection.

[25, 26.] These words, as Stier observes, are the central point of the history — the great testimony to himself, of which the subsequent miracle is the proof. The intention of the saying seems to have been, to awaken in Martha the faith, that he could raise her brother from the dead, in its highest and proper form. This he does by announcing himself as “the Resurrection” (*q. d.* That resurrection in the last day shall be only by my power, and therefore I can raise now as well), and more than that, “the Life itself: so that he that believeth in me,” (= Lazarus, in her mind,) “even though he have died,” (*ἀπεθάνη*, past,) “shall live; and he that liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die;” *i. e.* “faith in me is the source of life both here and hereafter; and those who have it have life, so that they shall never die;” — physical death being overlooked and disregarded, in comparison with that which is really and only death. — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER XII.

HOSPITALITY OF FRIENDS. — LAZARUS AT TABLE. — SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE ON MERELY CURIOUS QUESTIONS. — PERFUME OF LOVE. — THE POOR. — PROPHETIC LIBERALITY. — ATTEMPT OF PHARISEES TO KILL LAZARUS. — RESULTS OF DEATH OF CHRIST. — THE WORLD'S CRISES. — PROPHECY. — COWARDLY CONVICTIONS.

THE chapter opens with an incident in the life of Jesus not destitute of very precious instruction. It appears that when Jesus was come to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the grave, that they, to show him all the respect that they thought due to an illustrious teacher — for more than that some of them did not recognize him to be — made him a supper, to which he was invited as an act of hospitality, and Martha, as we find her character throughout the Gospels, served; “but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.” This anecdote was striking proof that Lazarus was really raised from the dead, that it was no deception of an hour, but a deed of power followed by perfect, lasting, and unequivocal proof. We find, what strikes one as no slight evidence of the inspiration of this book, nothing said by Lazarus, after his resurrection from the dead, of the process he had gone through, of the scenes he had witnessed, of the blessings he had experienced; and yet these are all points which we long and thirst to know — which it would gratify our curiosity to know. But as this book was not written to gratify the curiosity of men, but to enlighten their minds, and win their hearts to the Saviour, its silence upon curious questions is

as great evidence of its divinity as its eloquence upon questions that are truly good for us. We find on this occasion that Mary — the contemplative Mary, whose character was so completely a contrast to that of Martha — to express the love that she felt, took a precious perfume, a fragrant or aromatic oil, and poured it upon the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair, and the whole house was filled with its perfume. A miserable, narrow-minded, and avaricious traitor, when he saw this, instantly said, “What a pity to waste the perfume! Might it not have been sold, and benefited the poor?” Now, even if he had said this from the heart, it would have been wrong. It does not follow that the poor will not be benefited, because they that have, live according to the state in which God in his providence has placed them. It does not follow that the person that lives in the greatest splendor, provided that splendor be suitable to his or her rank, neglects the poor; or if that person were to give up the noble dwelling, and to live in a lowly hut, that the poor would thereby get the benefit. I do not think they would. That precious perfume had many fingers busy in its preparation; it had the ships of Tarshish, and Tyre, and the isles, bringing it from afar; it had perfumes of the rarest kind, that were bought and sold for a profit, and prepared by toil and skill, all of which had their payment and their equivalent. And, perhaps, by taking that fresh bottle of fragrant oil, and pouring it on the feet of Jesus, she did not deny the poor what the poor needed, but contributed more substantially to the poor than if she had never bought it, or none had sold so great and obvious a luxury. We find it as matter-of-fact, that all classes are most benefited by each living in its own sphere, and lending from that sphere a helping hand to everybody that needs it. But the argument here was, that the surrender of what was bought would be the benefit of the poor; while I believe the proper use of what we have is the benefit of the poor. If every one

were to wear seal-skins, like our forefathers eighteen hundred years ago in this land, what would become of all the cloth work of Leeds and of the west of England? If every lady were to wear cotton, what would become of all the silk manufactories? And yet the spirit of Judas would say, "Why wear that silk dress? Might it not be sold at a profit, and given to the poor?" The poor would not really be benefited; but the very reverse. It is only by having a correct estimate of social life, that we can see how poor, and mean, and narrow is such a remark as that which was made by a traitor, a remark of which many plagiarisms have been adopted in every age, and century, and country of the world. However, even Judas' remark was not genuine — it was not a sincere one. He said that it would have been much better if, instead of wasting it, the price of it had been put into his bag; not that he cared for the poor, but that he wanted to enrich himself. How very often have most beautiful aphorisms been mere covers to wicked designs! "The rights of the people" is a word that we hear sometimes on the lips of men, who do not care one fig for the comfort of the people. "The benefit of the poor" is another aphorism on the lips of men, who do not care at all for the benefit of the poor. The finest and the noblest maxims are often used as mere coloring for the most wicked and unprincipled designs; not by good men — that is impossible — but by bad men; for there was a Judas among the apostles, and there is a Judas in every country and class of mankind to the present day still.

But Jesus stepped in; and mark, again, how exquisitely striking is what I have ventured to call, with real reverence, the common sense that runs through the Bible! Jesus did not concur with the sentiment of Judas; he did not even, though he could, trace the sentiment to its source; he did not even condemn him; but with that gentleness which irritated none, and which conveyed truth that must be edifying



to all that heard it, he said, "Let her alone; the motive is so good, the design that she has in view is so exalted, that even if there were what seems to you a little waste, she has done it with a prophetic anticipation of an act — my death, my burial — an act which will tell more upon the ages to come than all that has transpired in the rest of the world before. She has done it to my burial." Whatever, therefore, honors Jesus is beautiful. I can conceive many a one who buys the choicest ornaments, from the purest motives. We may judge it unnecessary or useless, but they have done it from pure motives; they have done it, however feebly, to serve the blessed Master. Let us not condemn them, if we know and have learned the more excellent way. While it is true that a good motive does not consecrate a bad deed, yet a good motive does consecrate a deed which in itself is neither good nor evil.

Jesus added also, "The poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always." Now this is one of those maxims that mean more than the expression teaches; it denotes that distinctions of class and of rank will always exist. You remember it is predicted in the Book of Deuteronomy, "The poor shall never cease out of the land;" and here it is said, "The poor ye have always." You never can make it otherwise. There are all sorts of plans, and schemes, and movements, and arrangements in order to put an end to it, but none ever have succeeded. There will be men that meet with misfortunes which they cannot master; there will be men who are idle while others will be busy, feeble while others are strong, stupid while others are wise; and these elements will make a difference in society it is utterly impossible to level. And, generally speaking, those that try to make all society one vast macadamized road, do not mean so much to lift to their own level those that are below, as to drag down to their own level those that are above. A great maxim is laid down, that the poor will be always. Let us

minister to them, let us help them; not refusing help to a poor man because his own misdoing has made him poor. His crimes belong to God's province; his poverty is a call for man's pity, compassion, and relief.

We read next that the Scribes and Pharisees were so exasperated at this that they did — what? They “consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death.” What an awful thing is this, that those that saw the miracle, that saw Lazarus raised from the dead, would even try to put him to death! How absurd! Augustine makes the truly admirable remark, “If they had thought, they would have seen that He who could raise him from the dead when he died by disease, could raise him again from the dead if they killed him by violence;” and thus to attempt to put Lazarus to death to hide the splendor of a miracle, was an extravagant pitch of absurdity. Generally speaking, and it is a very remarkable fact, goodness in the heart helps to give wisdom to the understanding; but wherever the heart is actuated by evil passions, even the intellect fails to decide correctly, purely, and truly.

After this, we read that “the Pharisees said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him;” an expression for “everybody is following him.” “And certain Hellenists” — called here “Greeks,” that is Jews that came from Greece, whose native country was there, or proselytes from the Gentiles to the synagogue of the Jews — came to see Jesus, having heard of the wonderful things that he had done. Jesus then told them that the hour was come when he should be glorified, and he illustrates his meaning by a very clear simile: “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” One seed cast into the earth grows into a stalk that bears ten, twenty, thirty, forty seeds; and these seeds may be planted again, till golden harvests, that fill the granaries of the earth, spring

from the seed that died in the earth. So, says Jesus, I shall sink into the grave, crucified and dead; but the result of my death will be such a harvest of living souls that the angels will come to reap it, and heaven shall be replenished by the product of my cross in the world on the judgment-day. He then told them, in very solemn language, "He that loveth his life shall lose it;" that is, he that to save his life will have recourse to schemes that are sinful will lose it. "He that hateth his life" — loveth it less than the life eternal — shall gain it. "If any man serve me, let him follow me." He then exclaims, evidently under a deep sense of agony, "Now is my soul troubled." The word is extremely strong in the original; "stirred from its depths," as a pool or the sea might be stirred up, by the volcano below or the storm above. And he exclaims, within the garden, "Father, save me from this hour:" but then he stops — "For this cause came I unto this hour." Here is the human crying in its agony, "Father, save me from this hour;" but above it is the divine, acquiescing in God's will; "but for this very cause came I into the world;" and therefore I will no longer say, "Save me," but I will say, "Father, glorify thy name." And "a voice from heaven," like an echo to his expectation, "came, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." He then says, "Now is the judgment of this world." The word "judgment" is not a happy rendering of the original; it is κρίσις, the very same Greek word which we retain in our own language when we say, there is come a crisis; and he says, "Now is the crisis of this world;" that is — Now is that moment come when, if I persevere, the world shall be lighted and lifted up; if I stop short the world is lost for ever. This is the crisis into which is condensed the destiny or future restoration or ruin of the world. And then he adds, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;" I, if I be lifted up from the earth on the cross a sacrifice for sin, the love of

which that is the testimony will attract or draw all men unto me.

He then told them that a little while it was the light, that the light should soon set, and his presence should be no more with them. He then explains why they did not believe on Him — “Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.” He says it was “that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes.” Does this mean that God found an ancient prediction of men having their eyes blinded, so that therefore they could not believe, and instantly set about making the people’s hearts hard that his word might not escape fulfilment? Not at all. The prophecy did not blind the people; it only predicted that they should be so. What God prophesies must come to pass; but yet the prophecy uttered a thousand years ago does not one whit shape the conduct of men that this day fulfil it. God’s foreknowledge and man’s freewill, however incompatible they seem to us, are really perfectly compatible the one with the other. But how then, you say, were their eyes blinded? “God hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart;” just in the same way as it says, “God hardened the heart of Pharaoh.” God did not do it by literally hardening his heart, though one could justify that even; but he did it indirectly — that is to say, so many reasons, so many motives, so much light, were all set before him, that if his mind was not influenced in the right direction, it must be strengthened in the wrong. And you know quite well that when you can muster courage to reject what you know to be true, you will reject it more easily the next time it is presented, till to reject it becomes a habit. The result of constantly hearing and constantly rejecting the Gospel is the hardening of the

heart. The same sunbeam that softens some things hardens other things ; but as the softening arises from the nature of the substance on which it shines, so the hardening arises not from the sunbeams, but from the nature of the substance on which they fall. So God's word was the means of hardening Pharaoh ; and this miracle, rejected by the Pharisees, which they had tried to quench and extinguish, was the blinding of their eyes and the hardening of their hearts worse than ever, and the rendering their case more hopeless than it ever was.

Esaias said these things, when he saw Christ's glory and spoke of him. Now, when did Esaias see Christ's glory and speak of him ? We are told in the sixth chapter of his prophecy that he saw the glory of Jehovah — mark you, the glory of Jehovah — “ upon a throne, high and lifted up ; and the angels cried, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory.” That sixth chapter of Isaiah is the vision of Jehovah. But our blessed Lord, the right interpreter of it, says it was the sight of himself ; the inference is irresistible, therefore, that Jesus was Jehovah, supreme God over all, blessed for evermore.

Then there is appended a very melancholy statement, that “ among the chief rulers also many believed on him,” who could not resist the evidence ; but that they did not confess him, or they concealed their creed, and acted like cowards, for they were afraid they should be put out of the synagogue. Many people will be Christians in the dark, but refuse to come to the light ; and some real Christians are afraid to let it be known that they are so. Some of these may have been true Christians ; for many imperfections, it is obvious enough, are compatible with true Christianity. We must not say a man is not a Christian, because there is much alloy in his composition. This would be hard judgment. There is no workable pure gold ; there are

none in this world perfect ; and we must learn to see grace and the effects of grace often where great faults and grievous imperfections are about it. I have no doubt that some of these were Christians, sinful as their conduct was, and yet their painful characteristic is, "They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." They could not bear to be censured by the world ; they would rather conceal their Christianity than risk it.

Our Lord then tells them that he is come a light into the world ; that they that hear his words, and believe not, he would not judge them — that was not his province then ; but one should judge them ; and that his will and the Father's will were perfectly parallel the one with the other. He came to save, not to condemn.

Through all these solemn statements of our Blessed Lord, we can see running the idea of a responsibility on man's part, which it is utterly impossible for any to shake off. It is also very obvious that the knowledge of the truths of Christianity as revealed in God's blessed word, never has a neutral effect. By this knowledge man is necessarily made better or worse. The oftener too that one hears the Gospel without being influenced by it for the better, or without accepting its offers, the more disposed one will be to reject it again, till at length God says, "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof : I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me : for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord : they would none of my counsel : they despised all my reproof.

Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Than these lines from the Book of Proverbs, I do not know a more startling statement in Scripture. Are we halting between two courses? Are we adjourning present duties to a more convenient season? Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief!

## CHAPTER XII. 12-16.

PALM-SUNDAY. — ITS ORIGIN. — JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM AS PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING. — A CONQUEROR. — PEOPLE REMAIN FAITHFUL. — JEWS HAD THE OLD TESTAMENT. — PROPHECY LITERALLY FULFILLED. — HISTORY. — CHRIST A PRIEST AND KING. — SALVATION. — BIBLE. — TEACHING.

AN interesting fulfilment of ancient prophecy occurs in this chapter, — “On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass’s colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.”

Palm-Sunday has its origin and name in this chapter. It has no divine authority for its institution, it is the mere ordinance of man; it may have its use and value, — it may be perverted and abused. It singularly happens that in the Roman Missal appointed for Palm-Sunday there is more of Scripture and less of human tradition than in most of the festivals of that corrupt Church. The procession on this occasion was obviously a triumphant one; Jesus marched into Jerusalem more with the air of a triumphant conqueror than of a victim about to be nailed to a cross to make an atonement for the sins of all that believe. Were we



very minutely to analyze the chapter, we might see that he entered as a prophet, to teach Jerusalem its ruin; he entered also as a priest, taking possession of a temple that was his; and the voices of the delighted multitude recognized in him the King of glory, when they shouted in his hearing, "Hosanna: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Usually the Redeemer veiled his intrinsic and essential greatness; but occasionally he let gleams of the inner glory break forth through the outer shroud, lest men might think, from the meanness of the shroud, that all was human, and might fail to know, what it was so saving and important to know, that in that Man of Sorrows was the mighty God, — that under that countenance, more marred than any, was the Prince of the kings of the earth. He set forth enough of his humanity to prove he was the predicted Man of Sorrows; he let forth occasionally enough of his glory to demonstrate that under the Man of Sorrows was the mighty God, the Prince of peace. It is also singular that almost on every occasion when the irrepressible beams of his glory broke forth, it was upon the eve of some signal suffering, humiliation, or sorrow. It was in the garden of Gethsemane, when all seemed lost, and the weight of a world upon his spirit almost crushed him to the earth, that weeping, and bleeding, and downcast, he cried in agony, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It was then that the starry host bowed from the firmament, and angels came upon speedy wings to comfort him, and indicated that whilst he seemed as a man, there was more than man in the Sufferer there. It was on the cross, when all seemed desolate, and when he cried, apparently upon the brink of despair, though not really so, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that he gave expression to one of the most majestic acts of royalty, one of the noblest proofs of his Deity, as he said to the dying thief upon his right, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." We see the light and

the shadow, the sunshine and the storm, the human and the divine, weakness and strength, the finite and the infinite, constantly interchanging their play, and indicating that this wondrous character was nothing less than God manifest in the flesh. But perhaps he may have designed on this occasion, when he marched into Jerusalem less as a pilgrim, and more in majestic procession, to indicate that he went to suffer not by compulsion, but willingly. It was essential to his sacrifice that it should not be extorted from him, but freely rendered; and therefore he says, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up." On this occasion, therefore, he is not dragged to the cross a reluctant prisoner, but he marches in triumph to the cross as to the throne of his power, as to the place of his greatest honor. He went, he was not driven; and what bound him to the cross so fast was not the nails that man had fastened, but the cords of love of his own heart.

After this, we read that the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the priests, all the ecclesiastics who hated him, watched for every opportunity to destroy him. It was the multitude, not the priests, — the laity, not the ecclesiastics, — that gave him a joyous recognition in his priestly procession, "Hosanna: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." It has been so in all ages; the priest has often apostatized from the truth, the mass of the people rarely — I say rarely, not never. Most heresies have been broached by the priests, not by the people. The greatest injury on Christianity — sad and sorrowful recollection — is what has been inflicted upon it by them that were consecrated and appointed to vindicate and promote it; and when the whole upper strata of the Church have become completely corrupted, the golden deposit has descended to the lowest, and found a lodging, a shelter, and a resting-place there. I said not always; for alas, alas! the very lips that shouted on Palm-Sunday, if I may so call it, "Hosanna," shouted on Good-Friday, "Away

with him, away with him; Crucify him, crucify him." Truly we are not to put our trust in princes, but I fear we may not put our implicit trust in any — "Cursed is he that trusteth in an arm of flesh;" he only never shall be moved, and he never will be disappointed, whose trust is in the Rock of Ages. There was in this multitude on this occasion much also that was admirable. We are told in the chapter, they were going to a festival of the Jews to celebrate that festival with the rest of their fellow-countrymen. But it is interesting to notice that the crowd, for such they were, lifted their eyes above the festival, and rested them upon Him who was its object and end. They were so satisfied with Christ, the end of the law, that, as far as we can gather from the chapter, they remained studying him, neglecting the fading scene and ceremony around them. May we not learn a lesson from this? to lift our eyes far above the baptismal font, and see, not water, but the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Giver of life; to lift our eyes far above the communion table, and to see, not bread and wine that priest or presbyter can bless, but the living bread that is in heaven, the nutriment, the strength, and the refreshment of his believing people. It is a happy teaching when we hold fast the sign, but look far, far above it. Scepticism would destroy the sacrament, superstition would make a god of the sacrament; enlightened Christianity loves the rite because it has the superscription of Christ on it; it looks beyond the rite to him whom it represents, and of whom it says, "Behold not me, but the Lamb of God that instituted me, who alone taketh away the sins of the world."

The crowd, we are told, cast branches of palm-trees before him. The white-robed multitude that stood before the throne had palms in their hands. These were the signs of their victories; and when the crowd threw palm branches that they had gathered from the trees on the road side in the path of Jesus, they meant to show that he was a con-

queror, as I doubt not many of them felt, not of Cæsar's armies, but of Satan's progeny, sin, and sorrow, and death. They cast palm branches before him, to denote perhaps that his victories were real because they were moral. He overcame the sharpness of death, he burst the barriers of the grave, he triumphed over principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. His wounds were the weapons of his triumph, his death was a glorious victory. He was crushed, but he was not conquered: the grave received him as a victim; unexpectedly it discovered he was its vanquisher; and through death he overcame him that had the power of death; thus conquered that we might not be subdued, triumphed that we might never be defeated. But not only did these palm branches recognize him as a conqueror, but many of the people also enthroned him as a King and a Prince. "Hosanna: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Hosanna," again, "in the highest." They recognized in Jesus, therefore, not only a conqueror, but they recognized him as the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. There was royalty in Christ's acts; there was a kingly shine and an awful majesty in every word he spoke, in every deed he did, in every miracle he wrought. It was royalty that hushed the winds, which obeyed as his loyal subjects; it was royalty that repressed the tumultuous waves, and made the stormy sea a promenade for his holy feet; it was royalty that hushed the passions of the people, that scattered the prejudices of the crowd, and vindicated for himself the title so justly given him, "the King of Israel." And what that poor crowd saw dimly, we now know thoroughly. We can say, with an emphasis with which they never said it, "Thou art the King of Israel, thou art the King of glory, O Christ." But is this to us a mere cold intellectual deduction, or is it a life, an experience, the innermost feeling of our hearts, the result, in short, of having felt within the influence of his sceptre? The effects of his

royalty are passions removed, prejudices scattered, till at last we exclaim, under the conscious presence of Christ, "What manner of man is this, that the winds of prejudice and the waves of passion in our hearts instantly obey him?" That multitude, when they scattered the palm branches before him, and shouted, "Thou art the King of Israel;" or, "Blessed be the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord," evidently referred to passages that predicted his advent. In the 24th Psalm, "Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." In the 118th Psalm, which was part and parcel of what the Jews called the great Hallel, and which was supposed to have been sung at the first Supper, instituted by our Lord, "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Save, we beseech thee," being the simple translation of "Hosanna." Now what the people did on this occasion is evidence that they must have had the Old Testament in their hands, and that they must have been acquainted with it. And if the Jew held the Old Testament as his right, why should the Gentile be denied it? If the ancient Jew in the dim light of the Old Testament could see in Christ the King of glory, why may not the modern Gentile in the glorious sunrise of the New Testament see yet more clearly that Christ as Lord, and Saviour, and King of glory?

When they scattered these branches, and recognized him, they shouted in the language of the passage, "Hosanna." These are two Hebrew words, that mean, "Save us now," or "Save now," or "Save us;" and therefore when they said "Hosanna," they acknowledged they were slaves of a worse bondage than Cæsar could inflict, and panted for a nobler freedom than Cæsar could bestow. Jesus saved then, and he saves still. His very name is Salvation; "he shall save his people from their sins." What he purchased by his blood eighteen centuries ago he now bestows by his

power. What he deserved upon the cross as a Priest he bestows from his throne as a King. He earned for us a right to heaven when he died ; he makes good for us that right to heaven by his exaltation to the throne.

But they not only said "Save us," but they shouted, "Blessed be the King of Israel." All generations have indeed called him blessed in a higher sense than that prophecy was used of old. We have here, perhaps, a proof — an incidental proof — amid many others, that Jesus was God. On every occasion when special honor was bestowed on a creature, however excellent, he modified it ; but when honor was bestowed upon himself he accepted it invariably as his due. When some came to him one day, and said, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked," what did he say ? "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and do it." But when the crowd pronounced him blessed, he did not say that any other was more so, nor did he dilute the expression, but he received it as a conviction in the minds of the people, already a prophecy in the word of God ; for a day comes when all shall bless him and be blessed in him ; and a great multitude clad in white robes, with palms in their hands, shall sing, "Salvation unto our God and unto the Lamb for ever and for ever." And when he came seated on an ass, riding in procession to Jerusalem, he fulfilled an ancient prophecy with which every Jew was familiar : "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : he is just, and having salvation ; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Here then we have a prediction uttered many hundred years ago ; and when Christ comes, not one jot drops from the prophecy till it has ceased to be prophecy, and has become history. What is all the New Testament ? Just ancient prophecy translated into inspired history. And what is all modern history ? God's word illustrated by the comments of providential acts.

It is one of the most interesting habits to look around, and see Gibbon the sceptic, Hume the atheist, Alison the Christian, Macaulay the eloquent, all sit down to write facts as they have found them, and as they are; and after they have done so, behold! they appear the amanuenses of God, registering prophecies recorded on imperishable tablets. "Thy word, O God, is truth." And it gives a Christian composure and peace, when he looks around, or casts his eyes into Eastern realms, and hears the roll of the trumpet and the boom of cannon borne to the West, that he can stand by and feel that all those great Admirals, those great Generals, those Russian aggressors, those Osmanli defendants, are all the chessmen on the board, and the great Player and Governor of the movement is in the sky: they think they are accomplishing the purposes of Cabinets—they are simply fulfilling the predictions of God. This does not condemn them, but it gives to the Christian that peace which none besides can have, when over all the smoke of the field, the skill of the diplomatist, the shaking of thrones, the crashing of dynasties, he can hear ringing clear and musical from the skies, "The Lord reigneth." "Be still; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth." So here the New Testament is the record in history of prophecy that was given before; and so minute is the fulfilment that we find such a little incident as this amply fulfilled by Christ. Now I have often said if an incident so trivial as this has been translated into history by Christ, may we not put upon prophecy a far more literal translation than we are often disposed to do? Many people say, we cannot understand how the Jews could go to their own land, or Christ come personally upon earth; we cannot understand how this could be, or what is the use of it. The real question is, Is it in the Bible? If it be here, if the prophecy that Christ should come riding on an ass, and on a colt the foal of an ass—if so minute a prophecy was literally fulfilled, then we may

be sure that He that has written that, has written no incidents, only to be exhausted, but has inspired and recorded the least of them all that you and I may feel persuaded that heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or tittle shall not pass from this book till all shall be fulfilled. How beautiful is that name bestowed upon the Church here, the "daughter of Sion!" "Rejoice, O daughter of Sion." She is the bride of the Lamb; but the daughter of Sion, Jerusalem, has always been called in Christian language the Mother Church. The Church of Rome assumes to be the mother; she is simply a rival—a pretender—a cruel step-mother, not the true mother Church of which the Gentile Church is the daughter; and there is the mother in the skies, greater and more claimant than either—Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all. Christ's Church is likened as a bride in her relationship to him; as a daughter in her relationship to the Jerusalem that is above. And he says to her, "Thy King cometh." Christ is our King if he be our Saviour. And this is a very important thought. Jesus Christ will not be a Priest to any one by whom he is not held to be a King also. If you will be saved by his blood, you must consent to be governed by his law. If you will take his cross as the reason why you may be forgiven, you must take his law as the rule by which you are guided. We believe in Christ the Prophet, whose word is truth; the Priest, whose atonement is complete; the King, whose law is obligatory upon us. The Antinomian will take Christ as his Priest, but he rejects him as his King; the Arminian will take Christ as his King, but he will have nothing or little to do with him as his atonement, or his Priest. We must take him as our Priest, that our sins may be expiated; we must take him as our King, that our sins may be extirpated. We must seek forgiveness from his cross; we must seek direction from his throne. And thus looking to and believing on Christ in all his completeness, we are Christians indeed, the followers of the Lamb.



We see, in the next place, that Christ's Church is a kingdom. If he be our King, then we belong to a kingdom. Christians are not a drove, but a people; not a crowd, but a congregation; not a meeting, but a church and a kingdom. We are his subjects, and he is our King. And then this King is described here as "just, and having salvation." Just and lowly; but more beautiful than either to us, having what we need, what none else has, — as all fountains that pretend to be such are only proved to be cisterns when we seek from them that which Christ alone has to bestow, — "having salvation;" salvation from the curse of sin, salvation from its power, its pollution, and its presence for ever and for ever; salvation from the greatest ruin of the greatest sinner to the greatest pitch of glory and happiness for ever; salvation from the greatest sins of the greatest sinner of the greatest age, — his blood cleanseth from all sin; he is able to save to the very uttermost; — salvation without payment, access without a priest to administer it, without a penance to go through for it, without a moment to wait for it, without a promise to stipulate for it; free, without money and without price. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Glorious robes for tainted ones, white robes for torn and polluted ones, living bread for husks, our Father's home for the stranger's slavery, a crown of glory, an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. What a blessed possession! Such a salvation is not in the Church, not in the priest, not in the sacrament; it is in Christ; none besides has it; he has it only, and he that has it alone bestows it; and any one that needs it is welcome to ask, and if there be truth in the Bible there will be salvation given just for asking.

It is added in remarkable words, "They understood not this yet; but when Christ was risen from the dead, then they understood." Why? Because when Christ had risen, and as-

cended, and was glorified, then the Holy Spirit was given. I know nothing that shows man's ruin, apostasy, blindness, perversity more thoroughly than this: that with Christ man remained untaught. Take an apostle before the day of Pentecost, even sitting at the feet of Jesus, and an apostle after the day of Pentecost; it is not comparison, it is contrast. The one faltering, stumbling, erring, misinterpreting, and in this passage not understanding; the other the eloquent expositor, the utterer of grand truths that are still the lights of the world, the salvation of mankind. But the apostles understood it, we are told, when Christ was glorified; and they were enabled to do so because the Spirit was given. Now, we can understand the Bible just as we can understand Alison's History of Europe, or Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; any man can understand it intellectually, for it is one of the plainest and most intelligible books ever written. It has passages whose eloquence is surpassed by none; it has poetry in comparison of which Homer's was a mere rhyme; it has history characterized by a simplicity, and yet a sublimity, that has no parallel and no precedent; it has descriptions the most thrilling, arguments the most conclusive, appeals the most touching; and that man has not the ordinary capacities of the level of mankind who does not understand intellectually the Bible when he reads it. But there are two understandings of the Bible. To understand it as we understand other books is what any one may do; but to understand it savingly is what it needs God's Spirit to teach. The Spirit that inspired the book must inspire the reader of the book in order that he may savingly understand it. Till the book is an inspired one you may be charmed with its poetry, awed with its eloquence, touched by its simplicity, instructed by its history, any thing but saved. But read it as an inspired book, yourself inspired by the Spirit who inspired it, and then you will see latent glories breaking forth, you will hear undertones of heaven in all its harmonies, and you will

taste in it a sweetness, a satisfaction and a peace that will constrain you to exclaim, not as an intellectual inference, but a life, an experience within, "Thy word, O God, is truth." Now, the reason why many read the Bible, and yet do not savingly understand it, is, that they have not the Holy Spirit to teach them. I do not believe that the Spirit makes the book more plain. When we say that we have an infallible Teacher, we often misstate what we mean. We have not one to explain the Bible to us, but we have one that puts our hearts right, and enables us to read the Bible in the right spirit and in the right light. The Bible is seen in a light that streams from behind, like one of those beautiful transparencies that are lighted up by a light from behind, that shines through the painting upon the eye of the beholder, and not from behind the beholder upon the painting. So the light that illuminates this book, and beyond on him that reads it, is a light that shines through it and into our understandings, and in that purest light enables us to see all things clearly.

And lastly, we learn from this a very important truth. The apostles, it is said, did not understand the truths that they then heard, "but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him." Now this teaches us that it is not unimportant to store the memory and the mind of children, even if they do not understand it at the time. I think it most important, when you teach children the Catechism or the Bible, to teach them up to the point when they cease to understand. Whatever you teach a child, endeavor to make it completely to be understood; but suppose you fail in that, texts taught in childhood become illuminated in after years, just as the truths that the apostles here heard, but understood not, were yet appreciated in all their magnificence and force after Christ was glorified. When I learned the Shorter Catechism when young, I scarcely understood a word of it; but my recolle-

tions of it came to be enlightened in after years; and then the dull inscriptions on the page of memory became filled with celestial light, and truths expressed with consummate skill because taken from the source of all truth, were emphatically instructive, suggestive, and useful. So John Newton was taught texts of the Bible when a child, which texts, like inscriptions on monumental stones on the floor of a great cathedral, came to be rubbed out, or overgrown, or covered in the lapse of years of wickedness and sin; but one night, while tossed upon a stormy and tempestuous sea, and while standing at the helm, his place of duty, a single text that his mother taught him in childhood suddenly became illuminated as by a lightning flash, and shone like a star in memory; and that text was the turning-point of his salvation; John Newton ceased to be the reckless wanderer, and became the devoted Christian, the favored and distinguished preacher of the Gospel. All who do not believe in Christ are utterly without excuse; the evidences of his mission, his Deity, his glory, are so frequent, and so full, and so clearly enunciated in the sacred page, that unbelief becomes a sin, inexcusable in the sight of God, and unjustifiable on the part of man. God has done all that can be done to induce his rational offspring to believe and live. He has given line upon line, and precept upon precept, and told us to ask Him to interpret what seems to us beyond our depth.

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NOTE.— [37.] No attempt to escape this meaning will agree with the prophecy cited, verse 40. But the inability, as thus stated, is coincident with the fullest freedom of the human will: compare *ὁ θέλετε*, chap. v. 40. — *ὅτι*, not “for,” but “because.” A second ground is alleged why they could not believe.

[40.] The prophecy is freely cited, after neither the Hebrew nor the LXX., which is followed in Matt. xiii. 14. f. What God bids the

prophet do is here described as done, and by himself, which is obviously implied in the Hebrew text. The reading, *αὐτῶν* supplying *ὁ λαὸς οὗτος* as the subject of *τετεύφ.* and *πεπώρ.*, is out of the question, as ungrammatical and inconsistent with the context, which will only allow of *ὁ Κύριος* (*i. e.* Jehovah) as the subject.

[41.] *αὐτοῦ*, of Christ. The Evangelist is giving his judgment, having (Luke xxiv. 45) had his understanding opened to understand the Scriptures; that the passage in Isaiah is spoken of Christ. And, indeed, strictly considered, the glory which Isaiah saw could only be that of the Son, who is the *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης* of the Father — whom no eye hath seen. — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER XIII.

LAST SUPPER. — CHRIST'S DEATH ANTICIPATED BY HIM. — DEATH, ITS ASPECT. — CHRIST'S LOVE. — SATAN INSTIGATES JUDAS. — WASHING OF DISCIPLES' FEET. — PETER. — PROPHECY OF BETRAYAL.

THERE are certain traits in the chapter I have read that clearly identify it with the record in the other Gospels of the celebration of the Last Supper, or the communion of the body and blood of our blessed Lord; though in John's Gospel the institution of the Supper is omitted, yet it is so assumed that it is impossible to say it was not present in the mind of the Evangelist; and at the same time it is strengthened by the fact, that John's Gospel supplies conversations, sermons, and addresses that the rest omitted, and omits some of the incidents which the rest contained. It has been thought that Matthew's Gospel is strictly the Gospel of the Jews; Mark's Gospel is very much connected with Matthew's, and probably of the same stamp; Luke's is the Gospel of the Gentiles; and the Gospel of John, as called by an ancient writer, is strictly the Gospel of the Father, — God, in the endearing relationship of Father, occurring about seventy-two times in this most instructive Gospel. Also you will notice that the three previous Gospels seem to deal more with the outer life of Jesus; the Gospel of St. John seems more to be the echo of his inner sentiments, and life, and thoughts, and feelings. Hence the other Gospels are more what Jesus did; this Gospel is rather what Jesus said: and John, therefore, frequently omits an incident, in order to record a conversation of which that incident was the suggestive subject. It is so here; this chapter is evi-

dently a discourse quoted at the communion instituted at the close of the Passover, and therefore begins, "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come." He was not precipitated into death, contrary to his expectation or his will. He could say, "I lay down my life, and I take it up." He gave his life freely as a sacrifice; he took it up again freely in his sovereignty, as the Victor of the grave and of death. And he knew the very hour — he knew the details of that hour — he knew what would lead to it, and what would be the issue of it all: and, therefore, he knew "that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world" — the beautiful Scripture phrase for death; as Simeon said, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." And Jesus spoke of his death, in order that, in the light of what he said, we may see our death also, not as a violent act, but as a simple departure: as the ship lets go her moorings, and sets sail, so the Christian — the soul, that is, the man — strikes the tent, and leaves the dilapidated tabernacle, and wings its flight to a more beautiful clime, the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

How striking is that sentiment, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Now, this is as true to-day as it was then. Man's love is the love of a creature, dependent upon something external to it, and therefore ebbing and flowing with what excites or cools it; but the love of Jesus is the love of God, — loving us, not because of what we are, but in spite of what we are. Hence his love, being not dependent upon what we are, in its sovereignty loved us at the first, when there was nothing in us lovely, and loves at the last, in spite of much calculated to cool it or repel it. And he loves us where? Not as monks, imagining that they go out of the world by going into that most worldly of all worldly places — a convent: loved us, not as men insulated from the business and the bustle of this

life ; but loved us “in the world from the first, and loves us to the last.” And when he prays, in a succeeding chapter of this Gospel, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil of the world,” he shows there is nothing more absurd or irrational than that the instant they become Christians, they ought — if that be possible in the case of a real Christian — to go out of the world. The fact is, if a man be a true Christian, of all persons upon earth the world has most need of him — it can least afford to spare him ; and if he be not a true Christian, he will not be made one by going into seclusion, or separating himself from the duties of the world. But the fact is, many people are willing to get rid of the duties of the world, under the pious pretence — not pious really, but pretendedly so, — that they are anxious to escape the dangers of the world. Christianity is for this world, to enable us to triumph in it ; and it is for the next world, to enable us to be fit for it. And therefore Jesus loves us in the world at the first, and he loves us in the world to the last.

We then read that the secret of his betrayal on the part of Judas was the instigation of Satan, the wicked one. Many people try — not many people, I hope, but some try, especially those of Unitarian sentiments — to explain away the personality of Satan ; and others think that Satan is not what he is, and ought not to bear the blame that is frequently laid upon him. It is quite true that some men blame Satan, when they ought to blame their own depraved passions ; and it is a common fact, that human nature is always thankful to get anybody to bear the burden of its own responsibility. But it is no less true, that some of the most dreadful crimes in the world Satan is the inspirer of ; and it is absolutely true, that the greatest crime that man ever perpetrated upon earth Satan was the author of ; for “the devil put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him.” But then it teaches us this, that the devil does not leap into the



heart at once; he watches where the door is open, — where the pathway is paved. Judas had left the door open, the pathway was paved by covetousness and avarice, and Satan having seen access, took possession of him, and carried him to that dread and terrible act which is branded, and justly branded, for ever and ever.

Jesus therefore, we read, knowing that all things were about to be accomplished, poured water into a basin, and washed the feet of the disciples. You are aware that in Eastern countries the very first act of hospitality was to give water to wash the feet. Shoes were not worn — the feet were not covered in those days — there was only a sandal, or a piece of leather below the foot; and travelling on a dry and dusty soil, under a burning sun, the feet were necessarily covered with dust; and the very first act of refreshment, and therefore the very first duty of hospitality, was to give water for the cooling and the washing of the feet. Now, Jesus did so, as an act of hospitality, of service, and of self-sacrifice, — and so a suggestive precedent, not for the practice itself, but for the principle, the spirit, and the lowliness and love necessarily involved in it. There is no warrant, I think, for keeping up the practice now, any more than other practices that occur and were proper then. But it was then perfectly intelligible — there was a reason for it; the latitude and longitude would justify it — the practice of the country would justify it. But for Dr. Wiseman to do as he is now doing, — washing the feet of ten or twelve men that he gathers from the streets, on a platform erected for that purpose in a chapel or a cathedral, is one of the most monstrous and absurd attempts to imitate Christ that one can possibly imagine. It would be far better to lay aside the pomp and splendor of a useless ceremonial, than to imitate the blessed Master in outer acts, but deny him in his inner and holy spirit. We are to imbibe and exhibit the principle involved in this; but the practice itself is neces-

sarily obsolete. In ancient times, when they met in church, it was the custom for each to kiss the other; the practice now would be absurd. It was the practice then to wash the feet when they arrived after travelling; the practice now is unnecessary, and it would be no copy of Christ. It was the practice then to fast—I allude to fasting in the sense of abstinence from food,—but we are told in the Old Testament Scripture, that the fast that the Lord has chosen is to undo the heavy burdens, to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow Christ. It is utterly worthless to keep outer customs, when we lose the inner spirit; just as it is worthless to keep as a sacred relic the pretended holy coat at Treves, whilst they that keep it and adore it crucify afresh the Son of God, and put him to an open shame. Thus we see what Jesus meant by this act; and he himself explained it now when he came to Peter.

You see Peter's character—his peculiar character—come out very strikingly. He was always rash,—he was always ready to express his mind before he had got a clear comprehension himself of what he was to say. He spoke often without thinking; he spoke unadvisedly, upon the impulse of the moment. This was before the day of Pentecost, and nothing is more striking than the contrast: Peter, so rash, so precipitate, before the day of Pentecost; and Peter, after that day, so composed, so self-possessed,—retaining all his early fervor, but regulated and guided by a grace, a strength, and an inspiration that he was formerly a stranger to. Peter, shocked at our Lord's humility, says, "Thou shalt not wash my feet." Then Jesus said, "If I wash thee not"—using the word "wash" in its higher or spiritual sense—"thou hast no part with me." Then when Peter heard that, he replied in the opposite direction to him. He said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Our blessed Lord again corrects his extravagance, checks his rash speaking, and says, "He that is washed"—

in the right sense of that word — “needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” And he shows what he means; for John says, “For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.” Now, I would not enter upon any thing controversial here, but I must notice that Jesus here speaks of washing the feet with water as equivalent in its moral signification to the washing of the whole body. May it not be true, that if our Baptist brethren are right in adopting immersion, we cannot be wrong in the assertion, that if water be sprinkled on the face, — that if the brow be washed, the babe needs not to be immersed, save to wash the brow, but is clean every whit? At least, Jesus assumes that the washing of the feet was equivalent to the washing of the whole body in its moral significance. I am not denying that immersion, as practised by our Baptist brethren, is right — I think it is quite right, and do not object to it at all; but I am only defending ourselves, and showing that if they be right, they do not make their cause stronger by alleging that we are utterly and indefensibly wrong. We have a good deal to say for ourselves, — a great deal more than I can say now, — but I am quite certain of this, that it is a subject not worth quarrelling about; that, like many other ancient practices, it is to be adapted to climate, to circumstance, to country. For instance, at the Lord’s Supper, they all leaned upon the left elbow, they all lay upon the left side; but in the English Church they kneel, in the Scotch Church they sit, at the communion table; and either way is literally and spiritually correct, while the spirit of the observance is the main and the better thing. So again in the early customs I have alluded to, — and it seems to me one of the proofs of the reality of this blessed Book, that it does not deal with such paltry details, — it does not tell you how much wine you are to take at the communion table, nor how much bread you are to eat, nor how much water you are to use at baptism. It says you are to eat

bread, and to drink wine, and to use water ; but in all outward circumstances it is magnificently latitudinarian — on all vital circumstances it is thoroughly decided and definite.

Our blessed Lord, after having given them the lessons that flowed from this circumstance, announced to them the awful fact that one of them should betray him. The apostles looked on one another, doubting of whom he spake. Innocence was the first to question its own liability to commit such an offence. All the disciples, we read in another Gospel, questioned each other — were agitated, grieved, alarmed. Judas was the only one that sat still in perfect quiet, though not in possession of the peace of the Gospel. Jesus then pointed him out, and told them who it was that should do it. And then Judas went out quickly, and some of the apostles thought that he had gone to buy something for the feast, because he had the bag, or that he was to give something to the poor, — not then knowing the frightful and enormous crime of which he would soon be guilty. There is a very beautiful sentiment which I omitted : on the occasion when Peter seemed not to understand the lowly act of our Lord, our Lord said, “What I do, thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter.” What intensity of philosophy is in that single text ! How many things occur in every-day life that you cannot explain ; how many difficulties in every-day duty that you cannot understand. How many things take place in the world of which there is no explanation. How many texts occur which you cannot well reconcile with others ; how many doctrines you cannot fully comprehend ; how many acts you cannot see the reason or the necessity of. How delightful this, that we may add to each and to all, “What I do not know now, I shall know hereafter.” We must therefore run the race set before us with patience, looking to Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith.

We then read, that when Jesus told them to love one another, and whither he was going, he gave them the great characteristic badge of Christians — “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” How beautiful is that badge! You know a king by his crown, a noble by his coronet, a priest by his robe, a monk by his cowl. How do you know a Christian? Not by an outer badge, but an inner spirit. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another.” The badge of Christianity, therefore, is neither a cross, nor a regal crown, nor a shaven crown, nor a cowl, nor a hood; but it is love within, illustrating its force in the life without. Peter, always rash to speak, said, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?” He had no business asking the question. We are all curious to know what God will not reveal, and what if he did reveal might very much trouble us, and could do us no good. This Book always replies to questions where the reply can do you good; it never gratifies an itching curiosity by explaining what can do you no good if you were to know it. Peter says, “Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.” And now notice with what calmness, with what a clear prescience of the future, Jesus speaks: “The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.” The sublime calmness of Jesus is most remarkable. Rousseau said, “Socrates died like a philosopher, Jesus died like a God.” We may modify the expression of the sceptic, and say, “Socrates lived like a heathen, Jesus lived like the brightness of the Father’s glory, God manifest in the flesh, the express image of his person.”

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NOTE. — [19.] Now from this time I announce to you, that when it shall have happened, you may continue to believe that I am (the

Christ). See chap. xvi. 1. See Matt. x. 40. The connection is very difficult, and variously set down. It has been generally supposed (Euthyn., etc.) that the words were to comfort the Apostles for the disgrace of their order by Judas, or in prospect of their future labors. But then would not *ἐάν τινα π.* have been expressed by *ἡμῶς*? Another view is, to refer back to verses 16, 17, and suppose the connection to have been broken by the allusion to Judas. But is this likely, in a discourse of the Lord? I rather believe that the saying sets forth the dignity of that office from which Judas was about to fall: *q. d.* “Not only was he in close intercourse with me (verse 18), but invested with an ambassadorship for me, and, in me, for the Father; and yet he will lift up his heel against me.” And the consideration of this dignity in all its privileges, as contrasted with the sad announcement just to be made, led on to the *ἐταράχθη τῷ πν.* of the next verse. — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER XIV.

POST-COMMUNION. — ADDRESS. — REASONS AGAINST SORROW. — TENTS ON EARTH AND MANSIONS IN HEAVEN. — PREPARATION OF A PLACE. — DEFINITION OF HEAVEN. — CHRIST THE IMAGE OF THE FATHER. — A COMFORTER. — TRINITY. — THE MEDIATOR.

It was after the first communion celebrated upon earth, as we are informed in the previous chapter, that our blessed Lord addressed to his sorrowing, yet in some respects rejoicing, disciples, the most instructive, rich, and comforting words, that we have now read. There is no part of the Bible so popular, so instructive, so replete with intense consolation as the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of the Gospel according to St. John.

The text that our Lord illustrates throughout is contained in the first verse; and by bearing in mind that every verse in the three chapters that follow is a reason why the hearts of his sorrowing disciples should not be troubled, you will see the connection, and trace the continuity, of the whole discourse. He saw them sorrowing because he told them he was about to leave them; and he now speaks to them such consolations as were fitted to prove to them that, instead of there being reason for sorrow in his departure, there was only real reason for joy, for happiness, and hope. He therefore begins, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Why? For this reason, "Ye believe in God," revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures; "believe in me," as the brightness of his glory, the manifestation of his love, the channel by which his mercy can come to you, and your prayers can rise to him.

And then he says, "In my Father's house are many mansions." The word translated "mansions," means literally "permanent abodes;" not *σκηναι*, tents that require to be struck; but *μοραι*, habitations that permanently endure. In this world every tent must be struck; in that world there are no tents, but permanent abodes for all the people of God. And how beautiful the picture, "In my Father's house" — one happy family, filling the many mansions of one great house; and over all, and in the midst of all, not a king, to awe by his majesty, but a Father, to embrace in the folds of his paternal and his lasting love. "In my Father's house are many mansions." And he adds, in language most familiar and affectionate, "If it were not so," and if I had nothing to hold out to you, if this were the end of us, "then I would have told you." I have been so candid, so explicit, so full in all my instructions, that depend upon it I should have let you know all; and if I have showed you the worst side and the best side in this world, depend upon it I should not have concealed from you the worst any more than I have concealed the best of the world that is to be. And because of this, instead of sorrowing, instead of having your hearts troubled, agitated, perplexed, which is the meaning of the word, you ought to rejoice. If I have been with you for your sake, I shall be in heaven for your sake; I am busy here about your business, and I shall be busy in the future about it still. I came into this world to redeem you, I go into your world to prepare a place for you. What a beautiful thought, that during the last eighteen centuries Christ has been furnishing, getting ready a place for his people; whether that place be beyond the stars, or among the stars, or on the orb we live in, this we are sure of, that under Christ all things have been preparing a place for us. Believing that this orb is to be the ultimate abode of the people of God, all things are getting it ready. War, and battle, and conflict, and pestilence, and plague, and famine, and



conquests, and victories, and defeats, are all the mere instruments under Christ, making ready the chamber for the bride, the home for Christ's people, the rest that remaineth for all the people of God. And here also is the very definition of heaven, "that where I am there ye may be also;" that is heaven. We ought less to care about the place, more to think about the character that fits for it. I do not believe that heaven is not a place, but we do feel that the character within is the first thing, the consideration of the locality is the second and the subordinate thing. Wherever Christ is, there is heaven; wherever the Queen is, there is a palace; wherever the sun shines, there is bright day; wherever Christ is, there is happiness for ever and ever.

Then Thomas, who evidently had forgotten much that he had heard, said, "We know not whither thou goest; how then can we know the way?" Jesus then tells him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me;" or, translated into the words of another text, "By him we have access through one Spirit unto the Father." On this revelation of Himself I will speak at greater length at the close of the exposition of this chapter. He reveals the Father to us, and introduces us to the Father. And then Jesus says, in language clearly demonstrative of Deity, but Deity manifest within the limits of humanity, "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also." But does not that assert that Christ is the very fulness, the very apocalypse, the very picture and portrait of the Father? Now he that is the portrait of the Infinite must be infinite himself. You cannot say, "If you had known the world, you would have known the Father;" or, "If you had known the Law, you would have known the Father;" but we can say, and Christ could justly say, "He that hath seen me hath seen in all his fulness the glory of the Father. Henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." "Philip then saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth

us." Here is the cry and aspiration of fallen humanity, "Show us what the Law cannot show us, what the world cannot show us, what our own consciences cannot show us; show us the Father, and we are satisfied. Then we shall feel as children, we shall expect our home; but until we see God the Father our Father, we cannot feel towards him that we are his children." Then Jesus remonstrates with Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Is it possible that I have spoken so much, that I have walked with you, that I have fed you, that I have done miracles before you, and yet that you have not received the truth that I came to embody — the knowledge of the Father? "How sayest thou then, Show us the Father? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" — I am the brightness of his glory, I am the express image of his person — "how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" And then he adds, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself only" — as if I were an independent agent — "but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me on the evidences I present, for the work's sake." And then he says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" — that is to say, that by the Spirit's help at Pentecost, descending on the hearts of all true believers, they shall be able to do works of greater glory, because far more spiritual and less material in their character, than those that I have now done. It is very remarkable that, under the teaching of Jesus, many of the apostles remained lamentably ignorant; but what a mighty transformation took place when the Spirit that Jesus promised descended upon them, and made the vacillating Peter the champion of the faith; the affectionate John the effective

teacher of Jesus still; and all the apostles totally different from what they were when He was with them!

He then promises, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do. Ask in my name, and I will do it." What a promise is that! Either that is true, and we have never yet accepted it; or else it is false, and we do well to let it alone. We have no doubt of its truth; and I believe if prayer were offered with more simplicity and unfaltering confidence in the name of Christ, that richer blessings would be received by all believers. It does not mean that you are first to find out what God intends to bestow, and then to ask that. You have no business trying to find out this; your privilege is to tell him exactly what you want, whether it be bread to eat, or the bread of life; whether it be raiment for this world, or raiment for the life to come; whatever you feel to be truly needful for you, you are not first to consider whether it is God's mind to bestow; but because you need it, therefore you may ask it to be supplied in the name of Christ. God will give it you if it be good; he will withhold it, though you ask it, if it be not good. It is your privilege to ask; it is his prerogative to discriminate what is good for you, and what is not. We have too much of metaphysics in our sermons, too much of metaphysics in our prayers; we need more of the childlike temperament that tells God all the wants that we have, and trusts that he will satisfy them according to the riches of his great liberality. Hence, adds the Saviour again, "If ye shall ask any thing in my name I will do it."

Then he adds the practical lesson, "If ye do really love me, then show that love by first keeping my commandments." And then he says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter;" as if to show that he had been a comforter while he was with them; and that in his absence another Comforter should be given them, "who should abide with them for ever, even the Spirit of truth."

Mark the interesting connection — he is the comforter, but only as the Spirit of truth. There is no comfort in a lie; there is only comfort in the truth. The natural tendency of man is to keep quiet, in order not to disturb, lest there should be trouble; the duty is to assert and maintain the truth, and leave the comfort to follow. The Holy Spirit first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth; he then through the truth dwells in the heart as the Comforter.

“But the world,” says our Lord, “cannot receive this.” These spiritual things are spiritually discerned; they are foolishness to the natural man, and therefore the natural man does not receive them. And then he adds, “I will not leave you comfortless;” literally, “I will not leave you orphans;” but “I will come to you.” And then he tells them, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;” that is the true test. To do his will is the best evidence of love to him. The evidence of love to Christ is not pretension, but practice; and he that does his will practically, shows to the world that he feels toward him that love, the fruit of which is whatsoever things are pure, and just, and honest.

Then “Judas, not Iscariot, saith unto him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him” — Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit — “and make our abode with him.” He tells them again what the Comforter will do; “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Now is it possible to avoid the conclusion that there is a Triune Jehovah, or Three Persons in one God? Here you have the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. Could a plain, candid mind, reading this passage, ever dream that the Holy Ghost

meant an influence, and not a Person? Is not the whole language only predicable of a Person? An influence does not teach, an influence does not bring to remembrance, an influence does not comfort. Any candid mind must see from the whole of this passage that the Comforter here spoken of is a Person, and a Divine Person.

This Comforter will descend in Christ's name — that is, of the Second Person; and he will be sent by the Father. I cannot explain the Trinity; I cannot say how it is; but I can assert, because God's Word has settled it, that it is. But are there not many things of which we cannot tell how they are? How can I tell how a spark in this city may transmit a message to Paris or to Calais? I cannot tell you how it is; but I do see that it is. I cannot tell you how a volition in my mind can set in motion all the muscles of my arm; that it is, I experience; how it is, is a mystery I cannot explain. And so in reference to the Trinity. There are Three Persons spoken of constantly in the Bible; the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; yet we do not believe in Tri-theism, but in a Tri-unity, or a Trinity. We do not believe in three Gods, but in one living and true God. We have an illustration of this in the very verbs that we learn at school. We know only in our own experience of three persons, and each person suggests the other. "I love," suggests "Thou lovest;" and "Thou lovest," suggests "He loveth;" but there is no fourth person; you have to begin again. "We love, you love, they love;" which is only the repetition of the first three. We see, therefore, in our own nature, "I," and "thou," and "he," and there is an end—a limit. Again, the ancients used to define the human being to the *ψυχή*, and the *νοῦς*, and the *σῶμα*; that is, the soul, and the spirit, and the body; these three things not constituting three persons, but constituting one person. And you are aware that philosophers, that used to conclude that light had seven component parts, on

future investigation have found out that it has strictly three. I do not say these things prove the Trinity; but as shadows prove a substance, these dim thoughts and shadows within our hearts may be not unfairly employed to illustrate those sublime things which defy all comprehension, and yet are revealed as plainly true. But it is more important to us that we should be able to show practical results from the doctrine, even if we cannot understand it. The Athanasian Creed states this truth most fully; it is only a great pity that it should pronounce an anathema upon those who do not comprehend it in all its minute distinctions. For many a true Christian holds the truth who cannot define it; many a true believer holds fast the Trinity who cannot distinguish and discriminate with all the minuteness of that excellent, but in this respect over subtle and denunciatory creed. There are Three Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but we shall best learn the Trinity by having the Spirit in our hearts teaching us all things. But does the Spirit teach us all things? no; he does not teach us science or literature; it is in the original, “all *the* things;” meaning all the things that I have shown you; “and he shall bring all things to your remembrance.” How important is that! Memory has suffered as well as the conscience and the heart; and the Holy Spirit is promised to bring to memory all things that we need to know. On a sick-bed, on a death-bed, on the deck, in a distant land, many a text shining from the leaves of memory, and read by the heart and the conscience, brings consolation, and hope, and peace. And he shall not only do that, but, says our Lord, “Peace I leave with you!” — that is his bequest, — “my peace” — so different from the world’s peace — “I give unto you.” Therefore, as I began with this text, says our Lord, let me close with it as the inference from all I have said, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

In verse twenty-eighth, he says, “If ye loved me, ye

would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father ; for my Father is greater than I." That text has been quoted by some to prove that Christ is not God ; but they might just as well quote the text that says, "He wept, he rejoiced, he was oppressed, he suffered, he bled." It cannot be said of God that he suffered, it cannot be said of God that he died ; it cannot be said of God that he weeps ; and yet would it not be very absurd to leap to the conclusion that Christ is not God because these things are predicated of him ? We say, Christ was man, strictly man, literally man ; so that every thing that can be said of man can be said of Christ : and yet we say, he was God — literally God ; and every thing that can be said of God can be said of him. Now when he says, "My Father is greater than I," he speaks of himself personally dying, personally going to that state of glory, and personally of the Father, in his name sending the Holy Spirit to them. Besides, if he had said, "My Father is greater than I," in the common sense and the common acceptance of those words, nothing would have been more ridiculous. How absurd would it be for me to tell you, God is greater than I ! you would instantly feel, "You need not tell us that ; nobody doubts it ; it is an absurdity, it is worse than an absurdity for you to say so." And, therefore, our Lord, when he used these words, must have employed them in a sense totally different from that in which I can employ them. He employed them in the sense that he was the Mediator, the servant of the Father, sent by the Father ; and that the Father, as the Father, sending the Spirit, was greater than he, — God manifest in the flesh, the Mediator, by whom he sent him.

And then he says, "I will not talk much with you ; for the prince of this world cometh" — that is Satan — "he hath searched me, and found nothing in me. Arise, let us go hence." He arose to enter yet more closely into the arena of agony and struggle. He invites them to accom-

pany him, that they might be witnesses what he would endure for them and their eternal well-being. What a precious chapter! What rich consolation! Blessed Lord, let not our hearts be troubled at any thing in this world, seeing we have in thee, and thine agony, and death, and passion, rivers of living comfort.



## CHAPTER XIV. 6.

*“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”*

### I. — THE WAY.

WE have seen the connection of these words with the rest of the context. Jesus tells them, “I go to prepare a place for you.” He assumes that there was a way; he assumes that they all knew the way; but Thomas either had forgotten it, or had never fully understood it; and therefore he says, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?” Jesus instantly proceeds to unfold to Thomas, and through Thomas to all believers to the end of the world, that magnificent announcement, which has no echo in heathendom through all its extent, and never was disclosed till he thus announced it, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”

How interesting is the fact, that Jesus overrules the imperfection of his hearers to the elucidation of the essential truths of the Gospel! If Thomas had not forgotten, Jesus, humanly speaking, had never spoken. It is this fact, that the whole Gospel is a continuous discussion — a continuous explanation of difficulties daily suggested, answers to questions ceaselessly put — which gives it a freshness that makes it seem, in every language and in every age of the world, as if Jesus were in the midst of us now, and speaking to us, as man never spake, of the things of the kingdom of heaven. The New Testament is not an essay didactically and logically unfolding the truths of Christianity; it consists of Epis-

tles written because of perversions of the truth that sprung up among those to whom they were addressed. Humanly speaking, if the Corinthians had never quarrelled, the Epistle to the Corinthians had never been written. If the Galatians had not fallen into Romanism — for such it practically was — the Epistle to the Galatians had never been written. If the Thessalonians had never misunderstood the coming of Christ, those two Epistles had never been written. Thus it was contingent, humanly speaking, upon the misconceptions of man, that the great and blessed revelation of the will of God should be successively and fully written. But has not this been the history and progress of the Church of Christ always? If Jerome had not advocated Monachism in the fourth century, Vigilantius and others had not so eloquently set forth the truth. If the Deity of Christ had not been impugned by some before the Council of Nice, that Council had not so ably upheld it. If Romanism had never cast its shadow over the globe, the magnificent protest that makes the truth sharper, and clearer, and more defined by the contrast, had never been uttered in the sixteenth century of the Christian era. God out of evil still educes good, and makes the very errors and misconceptions of man the dark background on which he throws up, in more magnificent relief, the essential and precious truths of the Gospel.

When Thomas made the objection, he said, “Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?” Thomas wanted less to know the way to heaven, and more to know what was the nature of heaven. He was less anxious to find his way as a weary traveller to his home, and more anxious to have his curiosity gratified about what might be the contents and the characteristics of heaven. Is it not too true, that we would rather know curious things than learn profitable things? we would rather find the solution of many an interesting problem, than an answer to the

deep and inmost desires and wants of the conscience and the heart. Thomas wanted to know what like heaven was; he cared less to know what the way to heaven was. Jesus, in his answer, tells him nothing about the nature of the future land, but he tells him in the plainest terms the way to reach it. He as much as said, "It is enough for you, Thomas, that where I am there you will be: be satisfied with this as a sufficient heaven. But it is essential for you, Thomas, that you should know the way that leads to it. The nature of the glory I do not stop to delineate; the way that you must tread in order to reach that glory it is my prerogative to unfold to you." And therefore he says, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. This is a central and essential truth. The way to heaven — what a precious definition! Ask Soerates and Plato; they are dumb. Ask Cicero and Seneca; they are silent. Ask philosophers, ask science, ask literature; and they must answer with Thomas, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" But ask Him whose words are weighty, who came from above, and therefore can tell you the way by which you may ascend above, and he answers in words that were the evidence of a God, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." How truly does this settle many a foolish controversy in the present day! Some say, if not in words, yet practically, that the Church is the way to heaven; that if you only belong to this Church, or to that Church, you are sure to get to heaven. This is an erroneous notion. We are not saved as members of a corporation, but as individual believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. You may belong to the purest Church upon earth, and yet not belong to Christ. The way to heaven is not a church, nor is it a chapel. St. Paul's in London is not a bit nearer heaven than St. Peter's at Rome; and it is not one whit easier to get to heaven through St. Paul's than it is through St. Peter's, because neither the one nor the other

is the way to heaven. The way to heaven is not a Church; it is the Lord of the Church. "I am the way; and no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Nor are our own doings and deservings the way. If we could climb to heaven by our own efforts, Christ had not come to die an atonement for our sins. If our own doings were in any shape the way, Christ would not have spoken truth when he said, "I am the way." Good works will appear at every footstep; but flowers in a path are not the path; they fade, the path remains. The flowers that bloom upon it, or the grass that grows green on it, are not of the essence of the path; they are only ornaments and accompaniments of the path. Yet wherever we are treading the true path that leads to glory, we shall be characterized by the true fruits that evidence we are the children of our Father who is in heaven.

When Christ announced in these words, "I am the way," he indicated certain great truths. First, there is union restored between heaven to which he went and earth that has travelled away from it. Earth was separated from heaven by sin, as an island struck off from a grand continent; and a dreary, a deep, and an impassable sea of wrath rolls in the mid-channel between. Christ Jesus is the way that bridges that deep sea, that reunites the severed island to the ancient continent, and of twain antagonistic precipices makes one holy, united, and happy one. Ask the Deist, "How shall I cross this deep, broad chasm?" His answer is, "You must risk it." Ask the Romanist, "How shall I cross this deep chasm that is between a sinful world and a holy continent?" and his answer will be, "The Church, aided by the Virgin Mary, the suffrages of priests, the penances you pay, and the absolution of the Church." But ask the Christian, "How shall I get to heaven?" and his answer is, "There is only one way, and that way spans the chasm, re-knits the shores of the severed land, brings into union and communion those that were not only severed, but antagonis-

tie to each other ; one end of the way, like Jacob's ladder, resting on the lowest level of humanity ; the other end of the way, like the same glorious ladder, touching the very throne of God, and enabling them that are here in this realm of exile to reach the heaven that Christ has gone to make ready for all that come to the Father by him.

There is implied in this statement not only restoration, but reconciliation. It is not merely a pathway provided for sinners by which to cross and come to God, but a revelation of a ransom paid, in virtue of which our sins are forgiven, and God is satisfied with us. That ransom he paid on the cross, — that atonement is complete ; and by it, and in virtue of it, God can come to me and hail me as his forgiven son ; and I can rise to him, and rejoice in him as my loving Father ; and his Father becomes my Father, and his God becomes my God ; and we that were severed, the offending and the offended party, are made one in the Lord Jesus Christ. But when Christ said, " I am the way," he meant the way not only to everlasting rest, but also to the possession and enjoyment of all the privileges, the characteristic marks and features of the children of God. This shows, therefore, that Christ is the way, — not preaches it only. We preach the way, but he is the way. The minister of the Gospel preaches himself your servant for Christ's sake ; but Jesus preaches himself your way, absolutely and entirely, to heaven. Christ is the way to holiness. There is no way to holiness except this consecrated one. From expediency you may put on this grace, from convenience you may put off that vice ; but only in and through Christ, by whom you have peace with God, can you renounce the lust of the eye, the pride of life, and the love of the world, and become the happy and the holy ones who are wending their way to God, to happiness, and to glory. This way that Jesus points out, and which he is himself, is the only way to heaven. Some persons, when they hear one say that there is but one way

to heaven, will add, "This is consummate bigotry. Are there not many ways to heaven? Why should you claim the monopoly of the way to heaven? or why should you assume that you are right in your idea of the way to heaven?" If I were to assert that the Church I belong to is the only way to heaven, that would be bigotry; but if I assert, what the Bible preaches and proclaims, that Christ is the way to heaven, it is not bigotry, but duty, to assert it, and at all hazards to maintain it. I know that the latitudinarian notion is, if a person be conscientious, he will not be condemned for believing what may turn out to be an error. A person may be conscientiously treading the way that leads to ruin, as well as the way that leads to happiness. The conscientiousness with which we do a thing proves our sincerity, but it does not prove that we are therefore right. If a person, thinking that prussic acid is an extremely valuable medicine, should drink a wineglassful of it, he would take it most sincerely — nothing could be more so; he would drink it from the best of motives; but the sincerity with which he believes it calculated to do him good does not take away from the poison its deadly effects, or save him from the death which it must necessarily precipitate. And if this be so in physical things, why should we suppose that it is otherwise in spiritual and eternal things? Paul was most conscientious when he persecuted the Christians to death; the Hindoo mother is most sincere when she throws her babe into the Ganges, or the China woman when she leaves it to perish upon the streets of Peking. I have no doubt that Pio Nono is perfectly sincere; I have no doubt that his Right Reverend Pro-consul in London is equally so; but the sincerity with which they hold the dogmas of the Council of Trent, whilst it makes me respect the men because they are sincere, constrains me no less to reprobate the doctrines which dishonor Christ, and are inconsistent with the word of God. Do not therefore suppose, because one is most conscientious, most

sincere, that one is therefore necessarily right or in the way that leads to heaven. You will be told by others under the same latitudinarian creed, "Let every man take his own way to heaven; why should you meddle with other people?" If, for instance, you were to say with all charity to the Unitarian, "You are not in the way to heaven," instantly the latitudinarian hearer will exclaim, "How shockingly uncharitable!" If you say to the Romanist, "You are not in the way to heaven," the same latitudinarian hearer will say, "What horrid bigots these Protestants are!" Let me distinguish: a man may be liberal, but he need not be latitudinarian. True Christian liberality consists in seeing a brother in Church or in dissent; but latitudinarianism means saying, "Peace, peace," whether you be in Church or Chapel, Mahometan, Mufti, Romanist, Hindoo, or any other. The latitudinarian surrenders vital truth; the true liberal Christian will give up the largest shell and husk of Church-discipline, but he will not for the world surrender the least vital seed of essential and absolute truth. To please a brother, I will give up the ceremony I love most; but not to please the whole world will I surrender essential and vital truth. I care not so much whether you belong to Church of England, or Church of Scotland, or Church Independent, or Church Baptist; I can agree to forgive you your differences with me in these matters; but if you do not belong to the Church of Christ, I must tell you, whether it be called bigotry or dogmatism, or any thing else, you are not in the way that leads to heaven. I cannot, therefore, be silent while every man takes his own way, because it happens that his own way is the wrong way. If there were many ways to heaven, then I should say to every man, "By all means take the road you like;" but there are not. It is quite true there are many ways from one place to another place on earth. If I wanted to go to Edinburgh by railway, and a person said, "You should go by steamer," a third party

standing by might sensibly say, "Pray do not urge him to go by steamer, if he prefers the railway. Let him do what he prefers. If he prefers to go by York instead of Carlisle, let him go; let him take his own way to Edinburgh, and he cannot go wrong." But the journey to heaven is not like this in all respects. If there were a hundred ways to heaven, let every man take his own way; but if Christ proclaims, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," it is not bigotry, it is not exclusiveness — it is charity, it is Christianity — to say, there is but one way to heaven, and unless you are in it you never can see eternal joy, if God's word be true.

This way, thus announced by Christ, is by no means a new one. Some persons have the idea that the New Testament, as we call it, is a new religion, and that the Old Testament is an obsolete religion superseded by the New. But you might as well say that the apple in autumn is totally different in its origin, its nature, and its character, from the fragrant blossom of spring. The apple is only the development of the blossom. The New Testament is not another religion, but the unfolding of the old and only religion that has been from the beginning. Abel was a Christian, Noah was a Christian, Abraham was a Christian. There is a Gospel according to Leviticus, just as there is a Gospel according to St. John: symbol, type, and shadow in the one; substance, truth, and spirit in the other; but the same everlasting and glorious Gospel. Noah got to heaven by the same way by which you may reach it. The way was not then so clearly revealed, but it was the same way. And this way, therefore, that Christ is, is not a new way. It was the only way in the Antediluvian Church, in the Patriarchal, in the Levitical, in the Prophetical, in the Protestant. There is salvation in none other; there is only one name given among men whereby you can be saved. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."



Christ is not only the ancient way, but also an amply sufficient way. How deeply is it to be deplored that Christians, many true Christians, belonging to different sects of the Church universal, or to different folds in the same catholic flock, seem anxious the one to dislodge or to overwhelm the other! as if it were impossible that all should get to heaven by the same way, and many must be excluded in order that the few may succeed. If you are pressing into a crowded church, this may be the painful and unpleasant alternative; or if you are going to hear some beautiful music, or to some performance where a vast crowd has congregated, then the few can be admitted, and the many in all probability must be excluded; and one can forgive a little pressing on the part of A, and some little apparent rudeness on the part of B, for the sake of the anxiety that he feels to get admission where he will be profited or pleased. But in the way to heaven there need not be any crowding; there is room, and plenty of room, for all that will; and if thousands more were treading the holy and consecrated path, instead of being inconvenienced for want of room, all would feel that it is so broad that the greatest number of the greatest sinners may confidently tread it, and yet so holy that the least sin knowingly indulged cannot be tolerated in it. We require all the sections of Christendom to constitute the Church of Christ; and instead of being afraid that the success of the Independents will exclude the Baptists, or that of the Baptists exclude the Church, we ought, while conscientiously asserting our preferences and determinately maintaining our principles, to welcome all God's people that seek to reach heaven by the same holy, happy, and blessed way.

The way that leads to heaven is very plain. It has been beaten smooth by the feet of saints and martyrs, and all that have preceded us. The ways that led to the cities of refuge had sign-posts, and upon each sign-post there was written in

legible characters, "Refuge — Refuge;" so that the manslayer running from the avenger, when he came to two ways, could ascertain which led to the city of refuge by the sign-board erected for that purpose. The way to heaven is plain, and plainly revealed. What is the best sermon? The sermon that tells you this most plainly. What is the best sign-board when one has lost the way? Not the sign-board that is most beautifully illuminated, or most exquisitely written in mediæval character, which has the disadvantage that it cannot be read; but the sign-board that may be written in the roughest letters, of the rudest shape, but is most legible to him that reads, even though he runs while he reads. So that sermon, that preaching, that Church is most apostolical, that tells you in most apostolic clearness the way that leads most directly to heaven, to happiness, to God. This way is so plain, and so plainly revealed, that the prophet says, "The wayfaring man may not err therein." The captious critic may err in the apprehension of the way, the bigot may err, the ecclesiastic may err; but the man that wants only to know the way to heaven, and only reads the chart that gives the way to heaven, he will not err or finally fail.

It is a living way. The apostle calls it, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "A new and living way, which Christ has consecrated by his own blood." You ask, what is the advantage of this? If you walk on a road that leads to a distant place, the longer you walk, the more weary and exhausted you become; by a law that everybody knows better than I can describe, the length of the way that you have to walk is the measure of the exhaustion you must necessarily feel. But the peculiarity of this way is, that the longer you walk the stronger you feel. You do not give forth strength to the road that you tread, but you derive strength from the way on which you walk, till you walk and are not faint, run and are not weary, go on from strength to strength, until at

last you appear before God in Sion. So that the Christian who has walked the longest in the way is the least exhausted; his strength grows with his toils, and the nearer he approaches the blessed and the happy home where many mansions are, instead of being exhausted, and fatigued, and faint by his journey, he is ready at one bound to leap from earth to heaven, and so be for ever with the Lord.

Are we in this way? or, translated, not into simpler, but into more modern and popular phrase, do you rest on Christ alone for pardon? Do you seek heaven with all its glory in his name alone? Do you plead with God to give you everlasting reward, simply and solely because Christ has satisfied the law, has borne the curse, has made atonement for you, has brought in everlasting righteousness? Walking in Christ the way is but scriptural symbolism for trusting in Christ, as the only right and reason under the sun whereby you can be admitted into heaven. The man that tries to get to heaven by his own doings is trying to reach the skies by piling Pelion on Ossa—he is attempting impossibilities. The Christian that seeks to reach to heaven by Christ the way, will not only feel all the safety of his course, but he will be characterized, whilst he walks it, by whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are just, and lovely, and of good report. A man trying to get to heaven by his own doings is like one condemned to the treadmill; he is always moving, he is never making progress. But he who seeks to get to heaven by Christ alone, advances while he trusts; his trust is progress, his progress is from strength to strength, until grace is lost in everlasting glory. And if you be in this way yourselves, are you trying to bring others to it? Do you tell them of its goodness? do you speak to them of its excellency? If you cannot do it by speaking, do you invite them by giving? If you cannot preach, do you send out the missionary to the Moslem, the Hindoo, the Chinese, as your representative, or rather the representative of Christ,

to preach for you? And if you feel this way so precious to yourselves, and if you feel it so dutiful to make it known to others, how should you value that word that is the map on which you can trace it, — that ministry, wherever it be, that faithfully and fully delineates and describes it! and how should you seek in the way to let your light so shine, that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father who is in heaven!

## CHAPTER XIV. 6.

*"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."*

### II.—THE TRUTH.

IN the course of my introductory remarks to this passage, I showed that Thomas was anxious to know the place to which Christ was going, and the way that conducted the inquirer to it. Jesus answered him at once, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." I have endeavored to explain Christ as the way. I stated that sin had dislocated humanity from God; that the earth was struck off from the great continent of heaven; and that Christ Jesus alone is the pathway that spans the gulf, reknits the broken isle to its ancient continent, and so of twain makes one. I showed that Christ was the only way, that he was the all-sufficient way, and that he was the way complete and perfect, needing no addition; proclaimed amidst the wrecks of Paradise, the moment that Adam was convinced of sin, predicted in the page of every ancient prophet, and destined in the fulness of the times to be accepted by all as the way to God and God's way to us. Let us now notice the second epithet he assumes for himself: "I am not only the way, but the truth." The whole three epithets are connected with each other. A way would be useless if it were so dark that we could not see to walk in it, therefore he is the truth; and a way illuminated by all the splendors of a thousand suns would be utterly useless, if we had no strength to walk in it, and therefore he is the life:—the way in which we walk to heaven, the truth that illuminates every footstep, and the life that in-

spires our exhausted spirits, and enables us to go on from strength to strength, and from grace to grace, till at last we appear before God in Zion. In one word, we are complete in Christ, the complete Saviour; having in him, from him, and by him, all we need to know of what God is, all we need to know of what we are, and all that can be revealed of the way that leads from the lowliest level in which sin has left us, to the loftiest platform in heaven, to which grace can possibly elevate us.

What is meant, then, by this expression or epithet, "the truth?" We have seen what is implied in his assumption, "I am the way:" what is implied in this, "I am the truth?" I cannot agree with those who say it means simply, "I am the true Messiah:" this is to dilute the expression. I am not the true Messiah only, but the truth, from whom all the rays of truth radiate, to whom all truths return, in whom all truths have their harmony; out of whom science is confusion, philosophy is chaos, and the world and mankind an inexplicable labyrinth; I am the truth." And if so, then he is the truth, in contradistinction and in opposition to all the erroneous systems and false pretenders that preceded his advent, and assumed to be the guides, the saviours, or the directors of erring mankind. Contrasted with every system that claims to be from God, Christianity is true; in opposition to every one that assumes to be a Messiah, Christ is the truth. What is heathendom? A gigantic and an overshadowing falsehood, the corruption of truths that were primitive, the invention of falsehoods that never were. There is not a niche in the pantheon that will bear shining on it the light of God's truth. The darkness is its element, sensuality its proper sphere, ruin to souls and injury to mankind its only possible results.

Christ is the truth in opposition to Mahometanism. What is Mahometanism? A mixture of Judaism, Christianity, and Paganism; a composite of truths and errors, in which the truths are overcast, and the errors alone are predominant;

that came in a desolating flood from Bagdad, on the banks of the Euphrates; that ebbs and dries up beneath the beams of that Sun that begins to shine upon Eastern plains; and that very soon will make way for the march of God's ancient people to their native land, and for the diffusion of that blessed Gospel, to the brightness of which all the nations of the earth shall yet come. Christ is the truth, also, in opposition to Romanism. What is Romanism? A mixture of precious truth and pernicious error; the truth the preamble, error the main body; truth its preface to deceive, error its substance that you must accept; every truth made of no effect by a corresponding error, and the word of God made a panderer to the superstitions, the follies, and the falsehoods of man. In opposition to all these, Christ is *the* truth; and in proportion as Christianity prevails, these systems must die. Our religion is not Christianity so much as Christ; we preach not a creed, but Christ. Our Gospel is the knowledge, not of a system, but the saving knowledge of a personal Saviour. Hence the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" is not, "Subscribe this creed; believe in that dogma; accept justification by faith;" but it is, "Believe in Christ, the way, the truth, and the life."

Christ is the truth in this respect, that he is the truth and fulfilment of all ancient prophecy. Take the first prophecy pronounced amid the wrecks of Eden onwards to the last proclaimed by Malachi, when he saw the first beams of the rising Sun kindling the distant mountain crags; and you find in Christ the truth, the complement, the fulfilment of them all. These predictions grew in brightness till Christ came; they are inexplicable except in his light. It is impossible to harmonize Isaiah with himself, or Isaiah with Daniel, except you look at both shining in the light, and covered with the lustre of Christ, the way, the truth, and the life. In one passage, Isaiah tells us, he is to suffer; in another, he is to reign over all the earth. In one chapter

he speaks of him as dying; in another chapter he speaks of him as living for ever and ever. Daniel speaks of him as "the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Isaiah speaks of him as "wounded for our transgressions," as "despised and rejected of men." How is it possible to harmonize these two? If Christ be mere man, if Christ be not the Saviour, if he be not the truth of these, holy men of old did not write as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God. But the moment all the prophets gather round the cross, and bear their testimony to Jesus, closed with those accents of mingled agony and mingled victory, "It is finished!" a new light is cast upon them all; each recognizes in Christ the burden of his prophecy; and all behold the Lamb of God as the end of their predictions, the object of their hopes, the all and in all of ancient prophets, and of living and of modern saints; so that, reading the prophecies in the light of Christ, you see not only that Christ is the Messiah, or the truth of them, but that their hearts were inspired by Him to whom the future and the past are equally and perfectly luminous.

If you could conceive a splendid statue to be made, and a fragment of the marble to be chiselled in successive centuries of the world; a fragment to be made in one city and in one age, a fragment in another city in another age, by different sculptors, without collusion, without communication, without compact; and if, after the lapse of 4,000 years, all these sculptors, who lived in different lands, breathed the air of different climes, had different tastes, educations, and precedents, were to meet together, each with the fragment of the marble statue he had chiselled; and when all were put together, they were to form the Apollo Belvidere, or some other magnificent creation of the ancient chisel, what would be your inference? You would say, "It is impossible to account for the perfect harmony of all, the exquisite symmetry of the figure, the perfect adaptation of limb to limb, of fea-



ture to feature, except upon the hypothesis that a presiding Sculptor in the skies inspired each, gave the model to each, controlled every stroke of the hammer, directed every movement of the chisel, and that God must have been with them guiding them of a truth."

Every prophet gives his testimony to the Son of God, in different ages, in different countries, under different circumstances. One describes one feature, another another feature; one describes a fact in his biography, another delineates apparently a contradictory one; but when they all gather round the cross, they so beautifully combine, so symmetrically fit the one to the other, that you find each prophet has been unconsciously sketching, not an earthly portrait, or a beautiful creation of human genius, but the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. So that the comparison tells in two ways: first, that Christ is the Messiah delineated in ancient prophecy; and secondly, that the prophets that so delineated him wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God.

Christ is the truth not only of all the ancient prophecies, but of all the ancient types. Prophecies and promises were, God audibly promising Christ; types and shadows were the footprints of Christ upon the sands of time, as he came to seek and to save sinners that were lost. Now, cut off the New Testament from the Old, and *Leviticus* is inexplicable. I never could believe, in the absence of the New Testament, that the God who inspired and wrote on stone that magnificent thing the Moral Law, would ever condescend to prescribe and record that childish and trifling thing, apparently, in itself, the Book of *Leviticus*. But when I admit the New Testament to cast its light upon the Old, — when I gaze on the countenance of Moses in the glory that streams from the countenance of Christ, I see that *Leviticus* is worthy of the God that inspired the moral law, and that the Gospel is there in dim prefiguration, just as the Gospel is here life and immortality clearly and

sharply brought to light. Refer back, then, to those ancient types, and see how beautifully and clearly they point to Christ as the truth. The paschal lamb tells you of his atonement; the rock in the desert speaks of the refreshing streams that flow from him; the manna that fell like the dew from the skies is the symbol of the bread of life; the high-priest in the holy of holies is the prefiguration of our great High-Priest; the holy of holies is the picture of the chancel of the universe, where Christ now is pleading and interceding for us; the morning and the evening sacrifice is the true Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. All these ancient and beautiful prefigurations, like dim and misty shadows in the moonlight of ages that have passed away, were meant to teach the Jew that the substance was yet to come, and to lift his heart from his thralldom, and his bondage, and his burdensome ceremonial, to that blessed day when neither on this mountain, nor on that, should men worship the Father, but all should recognize him in Christ as a Spirit, whom all should worship in spirit and in truth. These types were not substitutes for Christ, but witnesses to him. It is a great mistake to think the spiritual Jew trusted in the sacrifice that was offered on his altar, as if that were his atonement; and it is only paralleled by the modern mistake, that looks to Baptism, as if that were regeneration; and to the Lord's Supper, as if that were the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. The true Jew did not rest on his sacrifice; he used it as a help to see the great Sacrifice: the Christian does not rest upon the communion table, but uses it as a loftier platform, from which he may catch from afar a brighter view of Him to whose past death it looks back, and to whose future coming it constantly looks forward. And for the Jew to trust in his sacrifice, was to trust in that which was no savior; and for the Christian to look to his sacrament for salvation, is to dislodge Christ by the very rite and ceremony he has instituted to reveal, proclaim, and prefigure him. The Jew had his

sacrifices, through which, prospectively, he looked forward to Christ; the Christian has his sacraments, through which, retrospectively, he looks back to Christ: but Abraham, the earliest of believers, and the saint that fell asleep the other day, both beheld with one heart, and one common trust, and with one grand and blessed result, the same Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. There never was but one true religion; there never was but one way to heaven; there never was but one light to illuminate the footsteps of pilgrims, as they wend their way to the many mansions of their Father's home. The Old Testament is moonlight; the New Testament is sunlight. The future age will be not sunlight horizontal, where the sun has only just risen above the horizon, not sunlight vertical, where there will be no shadow, but all will be light, and life, and joy, and peace.

Thus Christ is the truth of all ancient prophecy, the truth of all ancient types, and the truth of which all created things are the fragments. You must often have noticed in the New Testament, how Christ employs the things of nature that appear accidentally to come in his way, to set forth the higher and the holier things of a brighter and a better world. It is not that he consecrated the earth to be a mirror of things he taught, but the earth was originally made to be so; and wherever the earth fails to shadow forth Christ, it is because the bright mirror has been broken, or the breath of sin has dimmed it, or the clouds of transgression shade and obscure the light that shines from heaven upon it. Every rose that scents the garden is but a faint picture, a dim portrait cast down to earth, of the Rose of Sharon; every star that shines like a gem in the firmament above you, is but a missionary come forth to tell you how bright, how beautiful is the Bright and the Morning Star; and all the streams of the earth, and the ocean with its ever-sleepless eye, the winds in their richest symphonies, and nature in its grandest harmonies, were all meant to set forth Him who is the Head of all,

and by whom and for whom all things exist. And when his consecrating footsteps shall touch it again, when his holy hand shall tune the delicate strings of this grand but broken harp, its ancient harmonies will be restored, its primeval order will return; and nature, God's made book, and the Bible, God's written book — twin faithful witnesses — shall equally, and with equal eloquence, proclaim the glory of Him that made the one, and the yet richer grace of Him that redeemed us with his precious blood.

Christ is not only the truth of all things, to whom all things point, but he is the truth as the revealer and the manifestation of God the Father. What is Christ to the Father? Just what a word is to my thoughts, what a deed is to my life. What is a word? A thought made audible. What is a deed? A word incarnate, embodied, made palpable evidence to man. Who is Christ? The Word of God — and literally so, fully so. He can say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." His lessons are transcripts from the Book of Life; his words are echoes of what God has said. Jesus in all his character is not a profile of God, but the full portrait of what God the Father is. What a blessed thought! "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; he that hath heard me hath heard the Father; he that comprehends me comprehends the Father." If I want to see the Father's power, I see it when Jesus moved upon the waters, and they recognized their Maker, and slept like infants at his bidding; if I want to know the Father's bounty, I see him turning the few loaves into food for thousands, and feeding the hungry multitude in the desert. If I want to see the Father's love — "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "For a good man some would even dare to die; but God commended his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There is no way of knowing what God is perfectly, except by studying, comprehending Christ,

as he is revealed in the New Testament Scriptures. If you look at God as he is revealed in creation, you cannot form a just and harmonious apprehension of what he is, not because God is changed, but because creation is marred, and mutilated, and broken. You catch here a glance that tells you God must be good; but you see there the storm that tells you he must be angry. In the sweet sunshine of June, you think of God as all love; but in the clouds, the storms, the hurricanes of autumn, you cannot but infer, with equal logic, that God is angry. You listen to the lark rising with soaring wing to the skies, and filling the whole atmosphere with his sweet music; and you say, "How good must be the Being who made that creature, and makes it thus to overrun with song!" But you see the hawk dash down like a thunderbolt upon it, rend it to atoms; and, with equal consistency, you must infer, "How angry must the God be who has made a creature to feed upon the bird, and to spend its life in the destruction of another creature that he also made!" In other words, the portrait of God as sketched by nature is imperfect, mutilated, discordant.

Again, the portrait of God as given in the law is hostile. The lightning is the coronal of Sinai, the thunder is its voice, wrath its atmosphere; and even meek Moses quakes, and the people pray that they may not hear the words any more. But when you look at Christ, you find God just as he is seen on Sinai, beneficent as you can discover him in nature, but also holy, loving, merciful; justifying the sinner, yet punishing the sin; magnifying the law, yet pardoning the law-breaker; just whilst he forgives, as when he condemns: mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have met and kissed each other. Except in the New Testament, I cannot discover how it is possible for God to forgive me, and yet remain what he must remain, if law has any meaning, if creation has any harmony, or the universe any government — a holy, just, and righteous Being. I

naturally ask, before I have read my New Testament, "Will God punish all sinners?" You answer, "That is surely impossible, or he would not have spared us so long." Then will God save all sinners? That we can scarcely suppose, because then, if every man will be saved, every man may live independent of and contrary to the Gospel. Then how high will his justice rise in punishing, how deep will his merey descend in forgiving? What is the greatest sin that he will bow down to pardon? What is the least sin that he will rise up to punish? You cannot answer; but when you know what Christ is — that he has paid all that we owed to God, and procured from God more than God promised to us — that he has borne our curse, and exhausted it — that he is our Representative, the Second Adam, and thus gives to all that believe in him righteousness, and peace, and joy, even as all that are by nature in the first Adam inherit misery and wrath, and tribulation and woe — I can see in that blessed Saviour not only the truth, but the harmony of God; I can learn how God can be just and holy and true, while he forgives and justifies and accepts the greatest sinner that believes on Jesus.

Christ is not only the truth in contradistinction to all error, — the truth of ancient types, the truth because the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, the truth because the revelation and apocalypse of God, — but he is also distinctively the truth. There are many truths, and yet he is *the* truth. We must learn not only to distinguish truth from error, but to distinguish truth from truth. There are some truths that you may deny, from your ignorance, and yet not perish everlastingly in consequence: there are other truths that lie upon the outside of religion, and about which the best and the most gifted of mankind have frequently erred and been mistaken. It is a truth that two and two make four; it is a truth the sun sets and rises: but your acceptance of these in your minds does not affect you, because, whether you ac-

cept them or not, you are the same, and they are true. But these truths are not to be placed in the same category with Christ *the* truth. You may know all the truths that are subsidiary to Christianity, and yet perish; but if you know Christ the truth, in all the fulness of his person, but err in the subsidiary and circumstantial things, you are safe and happy notwithstanding. You may be acquainted with all the worlds that the telescope brings within your horizon, and yet not be in Christ. You may be acquainted with all the discourses of theology, with the structure of minerals, the fragrance, the tints, and the properties of flowers, all the medicines in the best pharmacopœia, and all the knowledge in the richest cyclopædia, and yet you may not know that which the lowest form in our Sunday school knows — Christ the way, the truth, and the life. Secular knowledge is power; sanctified knowledge is life, and peace, and joy for ever. By all means teach your children, teach mankind, the wisdom of this world. Christianity has nothing to fear from that; on the contrary, it has every thing to gain from it; and the more men know, depend upon it, the more they will appreciate and the more they will value, when guided to study it, that blessed book which is a hundred thousand miles in advance of the age, not an inch or an atom behind it. For if you will study all that has been investigated in the past, the bright and brilliant discoveries in the present, you will see that instead of injuring one word of this blessed Gospel, they cast new light upon it, show it at new angles, illustrate parts that were not understood, harmonize parts that were thought to be inconsistent, and clear and indicate the whole as actual history, if not the inspiration of God himself. It is not therefore, I say, that we doubt what will be the effect of the growing knowledge of the age. I am convinced that all the chemists of the world, all its philosophers, all its geologists, all its astronomers, will one day, under a new and heavenly inspiration, admit, “Thy word,

O God, is true, and Jesus of Nazareth is the way, the truth, and the life." And every age is evidence of this; because, when some great discovery was made a hundred years ago, men trembled lest the foundations of Christianity should be shaken. Better acquaintance brought them to a clearer apprehension of the harmony between God's written word and God's created world. But what we feel is, that if mere secular knowledge be taught in our schools, in our halls, in our colleges — if it be not sustained, saturated, pervaded, sanctified by scriptural and Christian knowledge — we do not fear that Christianity will suffer, but that men will suffer for want of the knowledge of it. It is not for the safety of the Gospel that we insist upon the necessity of all education being scriptural, but it is for the safety of them who shall have been acquainted with nature's laws, but not nature's God — who shall learn their duty to their country, but not their destinies, their hopes, and prospects beyond it. Take away from our schools and our universities the Christian religion as the basis and the pervading element of them all, and you take the sun from his socket at mid-day, you exhaust the very atmosphere of its oxygen, and you leave only that which will prove poisonous in its stead. May God grant that our schools may never open without prayer, that they may never close without praise; that every lesson may be inspired with the richest and the best lesson; and that none shall ever be placed in such a position that they will be allowed to teach a child every thing upon earth except that which Timothy learned from his mother and grandmother, and which made him first a Christian, and then an evangelist and minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER XIV. 6.

*“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”*

### III. — THE LIFE.

THIS last epithet crowns and completes the first two. Each of the others would be incomplete and imperfect without the last ; it is their crown, their coronal, their complement. What would be the use of a way, however direct and sure in its course to glory, if no truth shone upon the travellers that tread it? and what would be the use of truth shining on the way, if there were no life in the pilgrims that marched from grace to the realms of glory? But having three, we have the complete provision for the salvation of the worst, for the glorification of the guiltiest that believe in Jesus — the way by which we walk to heaven, the truth that lights us on our way, and the life that quickens us whilst we slowly but surely beat that way to our Father's home and our Redeemer's presence.

Having seen in what sense Christ is the way, and the truth, let us try to ascertain in what sense he is the life. He is the fountain of all spiritual life. Just as in God we live, and move, and have our natural being, so in Christ we live, and move, and have our spiritual being. Every pulse of the heart, every inspiration of the lungs, every vital energy within us, is traceable to God. So every spiritual joy, every holy hope that shoots beyond the stars, every desire that nothing earthly can satisfy, every sympathy with God, with holiness, with happiness, with peace, are the evidences of a life traceable like a stream to its fountain, the Lord

Jesus Christ. But he is the life in a still higher sense. He is not only the fountain of life, but he is the very substance of our life. What says the apostle? "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory." And in another passage, still more strikingly, "I live;" but, lest that should look like self-praise, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I live is through the power" — the virtue — "of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." So that a Christian is connected with Christ; Christianity is not subscription to a creed, profession of a name, adhesion to a Church, but vital, actual union to Christ the life. As the branch has all its vital sap from the stem on which it grows, and as the blossom is only the development of that sap into its fragrant coronal, and the fruit only the end and the complement of all; so a Christian has his life and its development as a branch of the vine; and all the fruits of the Spirit are borne by him in the warmth and light of the unsetting Sun, and through the living virtue of Christ the Vine, to the glory of God, — the fragrance that exhales from them indicating the source of their life, and thereby giving praise to Him who is the life of all.

Having seen in what sense Christ is our life, let me notice some of the characteristics of this life, in order that we may ascertain if we be living branches of that true Vine, — living limbs of that true Body, — members of that only everlasting and glorious Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. All life is an inner principle. Life is not an impulse communicated from without, but a principle within that makes itself felt without. An automaton moves with all the precision of a living man; but the impulse is from machinery external to itself, not from vitality peculiar to itself. A hypocrite acts the Christian; but his are colors superinduced from without, — a mask put upon the face, — an appearance outside that has no counterpart within; he is not a Christian

from an inward principle of life. A Christian has a principle, a vital principle within, that constantly acts and constrains him; and he does what is right, not because it is expedient, but because he cannot help it. It is the spontaneous expression and unfolding of his inmost nature. When a Christian lives a divine life, he lives according to the laws of that new nature he has received from God. You therefore can ask yourselves, when you do what is right, when you give to the claims of the poor, contribute to the spread of the Gospel, do you do so because you would not like to be behind others, or because it is habit? or because an inner spring, inexhaustible as the source from which it is sustained, prompts you to lay your contributions on the Altar that consecrates the gift, and to give it, not because it is expedient, but because it is your very nature to sympathize with all that suffer, and to minister to the wants of them that be needy?

A second evidenee of life is, that all life — true natural, vegetable, or animal life — has a power of assimilation, which enables it to draw nutriment from appropriate things, and to consolidate that nutriment into its own strength, and bulk, and progress. If we have true life in our hearts — the life of which Christ is the substance and source — that life will feed upon that only which is congenial to its nature, and contributes to its growth. The Christian will not be satisfied with sermons that are full of splendid husks; what he needs is living bread. He will not be pleased with a cistern, however beautiful, if it be broken and can hold no water. Not all the paintings of Raphael, or Guido, or Rubens, will please a Christian in the church in which there is no Gospel; nor all the music of the greatest masters will delight him, where there is no spiritual worship. He comes to the house of God not to find beauty for the senses, but bread for his soul, — for living bread he cannot do without. It is always a sign of a vitiated taste, or of an ebbing life, when a Christian cannot be pleased with the simple exhibi-

tion of the truth, or needs a more splendid vehicle to make that truth palatable to him. Whenever a person cannot eat plain food, and take his ordinary meals just as they are, but needs strong stimulants and condiments, it is a sign of wasted powers, of lowered health, or ebbing vitality; so when a Christian cannot be satisfied with the simple bread of his Father's house, but needs the condiments of great eloquence, the stimulants of splendid rhetoric, or any other appliances of the same sort, it is an evidence of declining spiritual health. "The new-born babe desires the sincere" — that is, the unmixed — "milk of the word, that it may grow thereby." How suggestive is that single remark! Nothing else will please that babe, nothing else can be a substitute. So do Christians seek living bread, living water, the sincere milk; and if they have the life of Christ in its highest beat and in its greatest force, they will prefer a sermon that conveys bread, however humble the rhetoric of it, to a splendid oration that regales the ear, but sends the hungry empty away, and unfilled with good things.

This life within us will always hold communion with life. By a great law we are all conscious of, life shrinks from death. The homes of the living, not the sepulchres of the dead, are frequented by living men. And wherever there is spiritual life within, that spiritual life will court the companionship of men, not because they are rich, or great, or powerful, but because they are living and true Christians. Brilliant poetry you may admire; sparkling conversation may please you; you may have taste to appreciate all that the most elegant accomplishments can achieve: these things will have a place; but in the selection of your companionship, living religion will have *the* place, and you will prefer the dull that are truly godly, to the brightest wit that is without God, and without Christ, and therefore without hope in the world. Whatever relationships you enter into, whatever ties you form, religion will not be the only thing, but it will

be the dominant and the governing thing. Have you, then, this life that courts communion with life, and lightly values all in comparison of this the main thing?

True life is progressive — it grows. I have seen a wax flower, seemingly perfect and more expressive than the original; but go back to that wax figure of a flower at the end of twenty years, it will be of the same size as it was at first. A painted flower may be done so exquisitely, that at a little distance you would almost conclude it was a true flower, but it remains always the same; whereas the rose-bud of May expands itself into the full and fragrant blossom of June. Wherever there is life, there is growth of some sort; and if you have the life of Christ in you, if you are quickened and living men, there will be growth, not always upwards in conformity to God, but very often, and not less profitably, downwards, in lowly and humble acquaintance with yourselves. And very often that tree, whose boughs are loaded with the richest fruit, leans its branches nearest to the ground; and he who is most characterized by whatsoever things are pure, and just, and lovely, is often found, though the most fruitful, the most humble and lowly of mankind. But growth either in acquaintance with yourselves, or growth in acquaintance with God, is an inseparable and essential characteristic of that true and spiritual life, of which Christ is the source and the all-pervading substance.

If you have true spiritual life, you have within you a sensibility that will be conscious of any thing that does violence to that life. Our natural life is so constituted, that a pin-point touching the little finger, instantly awakens a sleepless sentinel nerve at that finger, who conveys the intimation to the brain; and the whole body feels and recoils from that which is pain. So if there be the spiritual life, what poison is to the natural economy — what a pin or a spear-point is to the physical organization — sin will be to a true Christian's renewed and delicate sensibility. A Chris-

tian, therefore, will shrink from that which is evil, not after he has first calculated mathematically the results of doing the evil, or the advantages of doing it, but in virtue of a sense too delicate to be defined, but too decided in its verdicts ever to be mistaken.

If you have this spiritual life, you will feel true sympathy. Wherever a Christian suffers, there a Christian will be ready to sympathize; wherever a Christian is happy, there you will be found to be happy too. The least groan of the sorrowful, the least pulse of the joyous, will have its resounding echo in your heart. You will weep with them that do weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice. And this is one of the most striking and constant symptoms of that true and spiritual life which Christ is in the heart, and conscience, and soul of a believer. Wherever there is life of any sort, it has a wonderful power of resisting, overcoming, and triumphing, amid outer and alien elements that tend to destroy it. Man, for instance, has a natural life so remarkable, that he can live amid the frozen ledges of Greenland, or under the burning sun of the equator. He can live in a temperature extremely hot, or in a temperature far below zero. The power of life to adapt itself to the external circumstances in which it exists is more wonderful than most are aware of. And wherever there is this true spiritual life beating in the heart—the life of Christ—there will be a power that will enable you to resist the intrusion of elements that are opposed, and finally, through Him that loved you, and fills that life from the heavenly Source, to be more than conquerors.

This life will show itself in action. If the heart be living, it will send the lifeblood through all the ducts, and veins, and channels of the human economy—channels so frail that one wonders that the tide of life can traverse them so often without destroying them. And if there be spiritual life in you, it will not be necessary to bid you breathe, or

see, or hear, or walk. You cannot help breathing, if you be alive physically; you cannot help praying if you be alive spiritually. You will walk, if you have life; you will walk with God, if you have the true life. And all sermons preached to you, that bid you walk before they have told you where to get life, that bid you breathe before they have told you where there is to be the first pulse of a heavenly nature, or that bid you "Do, do, do," before they have instructed you how you are to live the life everlasting, fail in the great end and object of a sermon. Give people life, and leave them to walk — they will take care to do so. Let us show where life is, and where you may have it, without money and without price, by Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, and who gives therefore the life; and you will go forth walking and not faint, running and not weary, mounting as with eagles' wings, until you are in the presence of God and of the Lamb himself.

Having given these marks and tests of a true and spiritual life, let me notice a few additional characteristics of it indicated in different parts of the sacred volume. The apostle says that they that have this life are, in every instance and everywhere, "alive unto God." "Alive unto God" is the expression employed by the apostle to show the action and the manifestation of that life in the believer's heart, of which Christ is the fountain and the very substance. This expression, "alive unto God," as the sign and evidence of the inner life, will mean, in the first place, alive to the presence of God. If, therefore, you have received this life from on high that connects you with the Fountain that is there, wherever you go you will have more or less continuous, or at least more or less interrupted, a sense of the all-enveloping and encompassing presence of your Father who is in heaven. Your language will be, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." The expression of your inmost joy, not your terror and alarm, will be, "Thou God seest

me." And surely one, for one moment reflecting, cannot conceive how it is possible for a man to enjoy a moment's peace, who does not feel that he is under the all-protecting wing of One that sleepeth not nor slumbereth. If my life be at the disposal of a thousand accidents, or at the mercy of ten thousand chemical laws that wait for the soul to leave the body, in order to rush upon it, and disintegrate it, and destroy it; if the turning of a corner that ends in the cessation of a life be an accident; then I must go forth into the world under a continuous sense of terror. I could not gaze upon the great deep without being overwhelmed with awe; I could not look upon grand mountain scenery without fearing lest in some way I might be injured. I should feel myself, in the presence of the vast and magnificent scenes of nature, like a drop of water upon the stream, like a leaf upon the wind; and I should feel indeed forlorn and forsaken, if the world be governed by what the world itself calls random accidents. But when I know that in God I live, and every step I take I move, and every pulse of my heart is a rebound to the touch of his finger; when I feel that in the height, or in the depth, if I go into heaven, or descend into hell, or take the wings of the morning and escape to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there his hand shall find me, and his right hand shall lead me; if I feel that I am immortal till I have finished the work that the Father hath given me to do; then I can fling fears to the winds; I can lay aside all deep and perplexing anxieties; I can go forth to the sphere of duty, whether it be in the van of an advancing army, or upon the quarter-deck of a powerful fleet — wherever duty calls me there I go, wherever my mission impels me there I appear, perfectly conscious that neither disease nor death, nor bullet nor ball, nor shot nor shell, can scathe me until each and all get permission or commission from Him who watches over me by day, and under whose wings I lie down by night. Nay more, I won-



der that those persons who have not a sense of living in God, who are not alive to his presence, can lie down upon their beds and sleep, not because robbers or fire may come, but from a thought that has very often struck me as a very solemn one ; namely, as long as I am walking in the street, or speaking, or studying, or whatever my work may be, I feel as if I had a grasp of life, as if I could take care of it ; I feel alive to a sense of its preservation ; and I seem as if I had hold of it. But when I lie down upon my bed, and fall asleep, I feel as if I had let life go, as if I had let the soul go, as if my strong grasp were relaxed ; and unless there be some overshadowing presence that can watch over me like an unwearied sentinel, when all my wearied senses have fallen asleep and forsaken their accustomed posts, I should feel that I could not lie down and sleep with safety. But when I know that that sentinel is there, then I can see a meaning — not a meaning only, but a magnificence — in the simple language of the sweet singer of Israel, when he says, “ I will therefore lay me down, and take quiet sleep ; and I will awake ; for the Lord sustaineth me.” What beautiful philosophy is there in God’s inspired word !

If you be alive to this sense of God, you will not only be alive to his presence, but to his favor ; that is to say, you will prefer the approbation of God to the plaudits, and the hosannas, and the cheers of the mightiest multitude. God’s favor or approbation will be your chief thing ; man’s approval you will always feel as the reflection of it. God’s verdict in your favor will be the main thing ; man’s plaudit upon earth you will regard only as an echo ; musical only when it reflects the original. And, therefore, very truly does the Psalmist say, “ There be many that say, Who will show us any good ? ” But, says he, “ Lord, lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance ; and then shall I have more good than the world with its corn ” — that is, with its necessary food — “ and its oil ” — that is with

its luxury — “and its wine” — that is, its enjoyment. “Evermore lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance.”

And if you have this spiritual life, you will be alive also to the glory of God. What is meant by that? Many Christians think that there is something transcendental in asking them, in all things, in all places, on all occasions, to seek to glorify God. They think it is something very beautiful for a monk’s cell, or for the recluse, but it is quite impracticable for every-day life. If it were so, an inspired apostle would never have written, “Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.” And surely the wise men that wrote the “Shorter Catechism,” though human and uninspired, never would have said that “Man’s chief end is” — not to get rich, as it would be translated in some parts of the City, nor to get renown, as it would be in some parts of the West-end; but, “man’s chief end is to glorify God; and,” as the issue of that, evolving in the pursuit of it, “to enjoy him for ever.”

If we have this life within us, we shall seek to glorify God. But you ask, What is meant by glorifying God? The answer is a simple one; just making God known. When we glorify a man, we add to that man something to make him great; but when we glorify God, who is incapable of addition, we simply make known what God truly is. And that person whose life, whose character reflects most of the likeness of God upon mankind, gives the greatest glory to God. We glorify God, not by making fine speeches, but by living beautiful lives; not by talking theology, but by doing divinely. It is the life that is the truest mirror; and when it is unstained or brightened by the touch of God, it will reflect the ray that comes from him with infallible faithfulness and brightness. If we are thus alive unto God, and have Christ’s life in us, then we shall feel an interest, and take an interest, in the spread and progress of his

cause. Tidings from the East will be interesting, and ought to be interesting; but tidings from fields of missionary labor ought, at least, not to be less so. We may take an interest in the downfall of dynasties, in the upsetting or the upraising of imperial thrones; but we ought to feel a profounder and a more thrilling interest in the spread of that truth that makes men free, and in the extension of that blessed Gospel which makes happy here and hereafter. The miser looks upon the earth for a supply of gold; the learned man too often looks upon it as a platform for achieving reputation; the ambitious man looks upon it as the lowest step of a ladder by which he may mount to greatness; but the Christian looks upon the earth as the sphere in which he is to serve God, and on which he believes, when it is restored and reinstated in its ancient orbit, and consecrated by the descending glory of God, he will appear again holy and happy: and this earth is not the least interesting of the sisterhood of stars, all of which have kept their first estate, being the only prodigal sister in the holy and happy sisterhood.

This life, in the next place, as Christ's life in it, will be, if I have not already anticipated this characteristic, a holy life. We may judge of the greatness of the master of a house by those that come out and go in. We may judge of the consecration of the temple not made with hands, that is, the body, by the thoughts that come forth, by the words upon the lips, by the deeds upon the life. And holy thoughts and holy deeds are to a Christian not the offspring of arrangement, but the legitimate growth of an inner, holy, and spiritual nature.

This life will always be a happy life. "The fruit of the Spirit is joy." "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but," says he who is our life, "in me ye shall have peace. And I speak these things unto you that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." It would be a

strange thing if God made his enemies happy, and left his own sons and daughters miserable. It would be very odd if happiness was the monopoly of the depraved, and strange and alien to the true people of God. But it is not so: "All things are yours; Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." "And all things," by a law struck upon them, "work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose."

This life, in the last place, is an immortal life. Our mortal life descends to the grave, and the place that knows us now will soon know us no more for ever. But the soul, quickened by Christ its life, will emerge from the shattered remains of mortality, and ascend with unfaltering pinion to those joys that are at God's right hand, to those pleasures that are for evermore. At the death of a Christian there is no suspension or cessation of conscious life, love, and truth. When a Christian dies, it is but the soul, that is, the life, disentangling itself from the crumbling remains of the tabernacle in which it has sojourned for a season, that it may breathe a better air, enjoy a higher life, so that the day of a Christian's death is really the first and the brightest day of a Christian's better and nobler life. A Christian knows the way to the grave, and he is not afraid of it, for Christ has consecrated it by his presence, and the footprints of him that bore the cross are traceable upon every inch of it. A Christian, therefore, goes down to the grave, knowing that its darkest gloom is not the twilight that indicates the approaching night, but that precedes the everlasting and the joyous morn.

Let me ask, in conclusion, have you this life? The life of the intellect may die, the life of the body must die; but this life endures for ever. A day comes when the crowns of monarchs and the chains of prisoners, the robes of princes

and the rags of beggars, the palms of great captains and the plans of accomplished diplomatists, shall all be as dust and vanity, and lighter than vanity. But a day will never come when they that are quickened by this life, that are Christians not in name, in form, or by subscription to a creed, but by life infused into the heart, shall cease to live. Blessed are they whose life Christ is; yea, happy are the people that are in such a case!

How complete is the character of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! He is as fitted to the wants as he is able to remove the fears, the diffidence, and despair of mankind. He is the holy and happy Way in which, and by which, men may arrive at everlasting joy. He is the Truth that reveals it, and shines along it from heaven to earth, and thus enables the travellers that have their face toward Zion to advance without fear of falling, or delay on their journey.

He is the Life. He gives a new life to every traveller, and daily supplies of vigor to that life. In the words of St. Paul, "Ye are complete in Christ." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an High-Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." There is not a saint before the throne of God or in the presence of the Lamb, who came to heaven by any other route. It is expressly asserted by our Lord, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." It matters not how excellent and exemplary he may be who makes the experiment of a new method of access to heaven, or how plausible the road he strikes out may appear to us, the simple declaration of the Son of God at once and for ever puts an end to all prospect, as it ought to exhaust all hope, of success.

To those who are beating homeward this holy way, I

would address words of comfort, encouragement, and of sure success. The Author is the Finisher of our course. He that placed us on the way will keep us in it. He has all power, and sympathy, and love. In spite of our unworthiness, he chose us; in spite of our unworthiness, he will keep us.

To those who have not yet left the broad way, and entered on the strait and narrow way of life, I would address solemn warning, earnest remonstrance, urgent appeals. You are in peril. Your precious soul is far from God. Your peace is deception — your safety delusion. Come unto Christ, and he will give you life.

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NOTE. — [Ver. 3.] The *ἐτοιμάσαι τόπον* is that of which we sing, “When thou hast overcome the sharpness of death: Thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.” (See note on Luke xxii. 43.) And thus it is *τόπον*, not *τὰς μονάς*, — the place, as a whole, not each man’s place in it.

[Ver. 3.] In order to understand this, we must bear in mind what Stier calls the “perspective” of prophecy. The coming again of the Lord is not one single act, as his resurrection, or the descent of the Spirit, or his second personal advent, or the final coming to judgment; but the great complex of all these, the result of which shall be his taking his people to himself, to be where he is. This *ἔρχομαι* is begun (verse 18) in his resurrection; carried on (verse 23) in the spiritual life, (see also chap. xvi. 22,) and making them ready for the place prepared; further advanced, when each by death is fetched away to be with him (Phil. i. 23); fully completed at his coming in glory, when they shall for ever be with him (1 Thess. iv. 17) in the perfected resurrection state. — *Alford*.

## CHAPTER XV.

JESUS PREACHES HIMSELF. — SIMPLICITY OF TEACHING. — THE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES. — CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE. — SUPPORT. — FRUITFULNESS. — UNITY. — THE INNER CHRIST. — REAL RELIGION. — FRUIT. — PRAYER. — JOY. — CHRISTIANS CHRIST'S FRIENDS. — MARKS OF. — THE WORLD. — THE SPIRIT'S WORK.

OUR Lord repeats the words of verse first in a way more explanatory of the original thought he designed to inculcate in the fifth verse; "I am the true vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Our Lord preaches himself as the great support and life of all true, justified, and regenerate believers. The Christian minister preaches not himself, but Christ the way, and himself your servant for Christ's sake. But Jesus could stand in the midst of Jerusalem, and could preach himself the Lord and the Giver of life, so that the preacher and the subject of the sermon should be one; all the glory coming to Him who preached, because of the subject of what he preached; and all the good that he laid down accessible to all that had ears to hear, or hearts opened to receive it. And when Jesus preached, we cannot but notice how simply he preached. We are prone to think that we must illustrate magnificent thoughts by having recourse to abstruse, or recondite, or lofty imagery; but when Jesus desired to illustrate the most precious truths, he seized the nearest and the simplest images and made these the vehicles of the great truths he designed to teach. Hence there is a simplicity in all that Jesus said that enables babes to understand, and yet a depth

beneath the simple imagery that the profoundest intellects cannot exhaust. He was passing along the streets; he saw the vine climbing upon the wall, or growing on the trellis-work, or standing alone; and looking at it the thought was instantly suggested by it, "I am the true vine." And every time that Jesus used a real thing in nature to be the mirror of a divine thing in grace, he gave an earnest and a forestalment of that ultimate and approaching day when all nature shall be restored, and become again the bright mirror of everlasting truths; the perfect and the pure reflection of the image of Him that made her, and of the greater glory of Him that redeemed her by his precious blood.

The symbol Jesus here selects is a very plain and very unassuming one. He did not select the lofty cedar that towered to the skies, though he might have done so; nor the strong oak that lifts its branches in the sunshine, and maintains their integrity in the storm; nor did he use the graceful palm-tree, to set forth himself; but he took the lowly and the humble vine; the vine not of Italy perhaps, spreading gracefully along the trellis-work, but like that on the banks of the Rhine, meek and lowly, but productive in Palestine of the choicest and the most fragrant fruit. And he said, That vine with its branches sets forth and preaches to you my relationship to you, and your relationship to me. When the disciples heard him say so, it never entered into their heads that he was transmuted into a vine as he said, "I am the vine;" any more than John understood, when he said, "The seven candlesticks are seven churches," that there was any transmutation there. It is part and parcel of imagery constantly employed in Scripture, where a thing is said to be what that thing is represented by; and so we must interpret such a passage as this, "This is my body," in the same way, and in the same spirit, and for the same reason, in which we interpret this passage, "I am the true vine;" that is, "I am represented by it — it is the best picture or image of what I



am." And so, "This is my body" — "This bread representing it is the best and nearest likeness of what I have become by being manifested in the flesh, and becoming bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh."

After representing himself as the vine, and selecting that tree to be the model of what he was, he represented all believers in holy relationship to him as branches growing out from this vine, sustained and nourished and fed by it; and in that beautiful image he conveys to us some of the most precious and vital truths of the Gospel of our salvation. The branch is united to the vine not by mechanical compression, not by artificial fastening; it grows from it, is part and parcel of it, is of the same essential substance of which the parent stem is. Now believers are represented as in Christ, united to him; the life that they live, the life of the Son of God; having real union to him. A baptized man has a mechanical union, or, if you like, an ecclesiastical one; but the regenerated man has a living, and a real, and a vital union. The union of the baptized man to Christ is temporary, and may be, and if nothing more it must be, dissolved. But the union of the living branch to Christ the living vine is so real, that no storm can carry it away, no hostile knife can cut it off, no frost can nip it; it is a living branch, it has living union, and nothing shall be able to separate the least or the loftiest bough from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Another idea set before us by this beautiful imagery is, that as the branch derives all its nutriment from the parent stem, so the believer derives all his strength — that is, his spiritual strength, his spiritual vitality — from the Lord Jesus Christ. In winter the branches seem dead; the sap has retreated for shelter to the roots, and under the warm earth it is maintained in its life till the first sunbeams and showers of spring come; then it rises to the stem, and by innumerable pores, and ducts, and channels, it penetrates every branch, shows itself first in the green leaf, then bursts into the fragrant

blossom, which ultimately ripens into the fresh and most useful fruit. So the believer derives from Christ that nourishment, in the strength of which he can crucify the sin that is dearest; in the strength of which he can gain victory, where the natural man would sustain defeat; by the power and presence of which he finds in every circumstance, and at all times, grace sufficient for him, strength made perfect in weakness; so that he brings forth not only fruits that the world has, but other fruits, and all fruits in richer fragrance, luxuriance, and perfection, because coming from Him who is the source and fountain of all life, and fertility, and fruit.

The next idea is that of continual support. The branches are sustained by the vine; it is not the branches that sustain the vine, but the vine that sustains the branches. So if we are branches of this living and true vine, we are supported by him, we do not support him. It is not the Church of Christ that supports Christ, but Christ that supports the Church — the true Church, composed of the branches of the true and living Vine.

We have next, the idea of fruitfulness. Our Lord frequently inculcates this. "He that abideth in me bringeth forth much fruit." Now the branch has no merit in the fruit it bears. Its fruit is the result of the sap that comes from the stem; when there, it quickens it, gives it verdure, fertility, and power to produce fruit; so that all the credit of the fruit is due to the stem, and none is due to the branch; it is merely the organ or the instrument of a power derived and received from a source external to and before itself. So a Christian, when he brings forth all the fruits of the Spirit, does so in virtue of a strength and a life that are not his own; the source of all is from above; the glory of all must be given to Him who is the author of all. And thus, as the branches that are most laden with fruit bow down to the ground, so the Christian who is covered with the most

fragrant fruits of Christianity, will be the humblest and lowliest in the sight of God. He will recollect his sins are his own, therefore he must be ashamed of them ; his virtues are not his own, therefore he may not glory in them. For his sins he must seek forgiveness from Him who alone can forgive them ; for his virtues he must give glory to Him who alone is the author of them ; and thus humility will be the atmosphere and feeling of the best, the most devoted and fruitful Christian in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the next place, these branches, thus bringing forth fruit, and belonging to the vine, indicate that all true believers are essentially connected together, and ought to have communion and fellowship one with the other. They may belong in this world to different classes, sections, parts in the great ecclesiastical communion ; but all true Christians, whatever be the garb they wear, whatever be the sect they belong to, whatever be the place of the world in which they worship ; if they be quickened by the same Spirit, pervaded by the same vital sap ; if they be branches of the true vine, are all brethren of each other, may have fellowship and communion one with another, and belong to the same catholic or universal Church.

Here we see what is the true source and centre of real unity in the Church of Christ. The unity of the Church of Christ is not uniformity in things that are subordinate ; nor speaking the same language, using the same ceremony, living under the same ecclesiastical polity. These things produce uniformity : but unity, Christian unity, consists of all being knit to and sustained by the same common parent stem, the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ, the source of our unity. The source of our strength, is the centre of our unity. In the Romish Church, it is dead men clinging to a dead tree ; in the Church of Christ, it is living branches growing out of a living tree. And our unity is not that we all belong to the same national, provincial, or congregational body ; but

that we all, whatever be the ecclesiastical relationship we may belong to, are sustained by and derive nutriment from the same true and glorious vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. If we belong to Christ, we belong to the true Church. Our first question should not be, What church shall I belong to? but, Do I belong to Christ? If I am a branch of the true vine, I am sure I belong to the true Church; if I am not, it matters little by what ecclesiastical name I am known in the vocabulary of this world, I have no lot or part in that which is holiness on earth and happiness for ever and for ever.

How important is it that we should seek to be fruitful! "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Now here is the only test and criterion before the world, that we are branches of the true vine. Our profession is no proof; our baptism and the ecclesiastical body we belong to is none; our zeal for a crotchet, or our contention for a dogma, is none. The only real unequivocal proof that we are true Christians, is, that we bear the fruit, the fragrant fruit of which the Spirit is the inspirer, and bearing by being branches in Christ, deriving our support and our nutriment from him. If we thus, then, by our works, that is by our fruits, show that we are branches of the true vine, we have God's own badge. We can appeal to better credentials than conjecture; we are sure we are his, by the Spirit he has given us, and the fruits he enables us to bring forth.

And we see too, from this idea, God's great design in all the chastisements with which he visits his own. "Every branch," he says, "that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" — that is, tends it, takes care of it. The meaning is probably, He prunes the vine, stirs soil at its roots, and sends the descending shower that ruffles its leaves, but yet cleanses and purifies its stem, in order that it may bring forth more fruit. God's great design in all his

providential dealings with his own is, that they may bring forth more fruit, "that thereby my Father may be glorified, and that ye may be seen to be my disciples."

Are we then branches of that vine? How do we become so? The Spirit makes us so; faith is the instrument by which we become so. Believe in Christ Jesus, rest upon him for the pardon of every sin, look to him simply as he is set forth in the Gospel, seek from him his Holy Spirit: he gives the Spirit to them that ask him; and that Spirit given to you will make you so truly, so really, a branch of this living vine, that in the strength of Him who is your strength, you will bear much fruit, and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

I do not know a more expressive or suggestive portrait of the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ than that which our blessed Lord presents in the opening part of this chapter. He likens himself to the vine, full of life and vigor; he likens all true Christians scattered throughout the world, by whatever name they may be distinguished or branded among mankind, as the living branches united to that vine. And he tells them that the fruit they bear is the evidence of their living union with him, and gives by its fragrance and its plentifulness glory to Him who grafted them on the vine; and he invites to accept the same blessed relationship, them that are by nature aliens, and strangers, and foreigners, without God, without Christ, without hope in the world. It is easy to see therefore what is true Christianity. It is not incorporation with a church, however excellent; it is not a name, however musical; it is not a profession, however loud; it is not subscription to a creed; but it is living, vital, the most close, the most intimate union and communion with Christ, the vine, the root, the life, the way, the truth. Are we united to him? The best evidence that we are, is the fruit we bear; and if we be not united to him, our privileges will only aggravate our ruin, our light will only guide

our steps to misery. Were men to think less of the church they belong to, and more whether they are branches of the living Vine; the whole church would be happier, Christ's cause would spread faster, and the people would be made ready for the coming of their Lord. Our Lord then tells us that "every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away." I do not enter upon discussions whether a true Christian can fall. Here is the simple fact; that if you are not bearing fruit you may be sure that you have never been grafted as a living branch into the living Vine; and if you are bearing fruit, you may be sure that you are a living branch of that living Vine. Satan is quite willing that you should discuss metaphysics, and Calvinism, and Arminianism, if he can only keep you from questioning your relationship to Christ, and Christ's relationship to you.

He says, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." And he repeats it again, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." And then he proceeds another step, "If ye abide in me," as a branch in the vine, "ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." What a magnificent promise is that! "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." I put absolute confidence in these words. I have often noticed that many Christians say, "Oh, should I ask this, or should I ask that favor, before I know whether it be good for me?" My answer to such an inquiry is, This is not your business to determine. The Great Giver of all will determine what is best for you. He asks of you from the fulness of your heart to tell him your least wants, and your greatest wants, and he has promised that he will satisfy and supply them all. It is quite true, he may not give you precisely what you verbally ask, but he will give you substantially what

you ask, which is far better. The apostle Paul prayed that his more bitter grief might be taken away from him; the Redeemer replied, "No, not so; but my grace is sufficient for you." If I have a heavy load, there are two ways of giving me relief; either by taking away my load, or by giving me double strength to bear it. I ask in my simplicity, "Lighten, O Lord, the load that is too heavy;" he says, "The load is expedient, but I will double your strength, and thus enable you to bear it." So that you may take it as an absolute fact that never has been violated in the history of the Church of Christ, that "If ye ask any thing in my name, the Father will do it; and it shall be done unto you." We are to ask of Him to supply the least wants, we are to ask of Him to supply the greatest; the ache of to-day, and the agony of to-morrow; the loss that you barely feel, and the loss that is most bitter, God asks you, encourages you—it is your privilege, it is his demand, that you should tell God what it is, ask him to give you what you feel that you need; and you may retire from the bowed knee, and the uplifted heart, with the unfaltering persuasion that heaven and earth may pass away, but God cannot fail to answer your petition. Now do not therefore begin first to discriminate, as if you were the judge of what is expedient for you, and then to pray; but begin first to pray for all that you want, and leave to God his own grand prerogative of deciding what it is best and most expedient for you to give in answer to your petition.

Our Lord tells them what is one of the great proofs of union to him, and the best expression of love to him, "That ye keep my commandments." In other words, if you are true branches you will bear fruit; if you have love to Christ, which is only another expression for the life of Christ, then you will do what he commands you. Herein is the great guarantee that evangelical religion will always be practical religion. He whom you love the most will exercise over

you the greatest supremacy and sovereignty; he that has been redeemed by grace will not be the first to trample on religion; but he that has received all from Christ will be the very first to go forth and show how much he loves him by the sacrifices he can make in obedience to his blessed word and revealed will. But not only does he ask you to bring forth fruit, or to do his commandments, because you are branches of the vine; but he adds that in doing so it is his prayer that his joy may remain in you, and that this joy may be full. Now what was Christ's joy? It is remarkable that our Lord in the Gospels often wept, he was often grieved in heart; he was never known, I think, but on one occasion, to rejoice. And the joy set before him, we are told, is, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;" and "for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." Isaiah tells us that joy was the result of his agony, his cross, his passion. Wherever, therefore, there is a conversion actual on earth there is responsive joy circulated in heaven. Wherever a new prize is snatched from Satan, and given as a trophy to the Redeemer, there Christ's joy is exercised, and the angels of the sky rejoice because the lost is found, and the dead is alive. And he prays that this joy may be yours. There is a joy which is natural—the joy of health, the joy of a bright and sunny day, the joy of companions that we love, of him we esteem; there is a joy in the study of literature that is beautiful, pure, and instructive. All this is right, but it is only natural joy. There is a joy richer and higher than that; the joy that springs from reading not of the triumphs of this world, but of the triumphs of the cross; the joy that springs up in the heart from hearing that China has opened its impregnable fortresses to the everlasting Gospel; that the great river Euphrates begins to ebb, that the streams that make glad the city of our God may flow in its deserted channels; and that over all the



earth Christianity seems to have risen from its apathy, and to have gone forth like the angel of the everlasting Gospel to proclaim the glad sound to every creature under heaven. That is Christ's joy; and he that is in Christ will not be a stranger to such.

Our Lord calls them not servants — for that was placing them in too lowly a position — but he calls them friends. And then he tells them, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” How true of us all! You did not make the first movement towards Christ; he made the first movement towards you; he touched you by his grace, your approach to him was the beautiful and precious response. If we were to wait till the first movement began with us, we should wait for ever. But it is He that in his sovereign love first influences us; and we, in responsive gratitude, love him who first loved us. All the disputes that true Christians entertain about the doctrines of Predestination and Election are mere logomachies. Wherever there is a true Christian he may deny the *word* “election,” but he accepts and glories in the substance of it. The high Calvinist will say, “God chose me from eternity to everlasting life; therefore he called me, therefore he justified me.” I believe this is perfectly true. The low Calvinist, or the Arminian, will say, “I do not believe in election at all.” You say to him, “Did you call upon God before he first influenced you?” “Oh, no; his grace first touched me, then I obeyed; he first called, then I answered; if he had left me alone, then I had perished everlastingly.” The dispute between these two is a dispute about words. What does it matter whether God resolved from everlasting ages to redeem me by his grace, or whether he resolved five minutes ago to do it? It is sovereignty on his part in either case; and in either case we have evidence that the influence first proceeds from him. The fact is, a great deal of the definitions of theology are necessarily imperfect. We speak of the past, the present,

and the future : but with God there is no past, and there is no future ; but one luminous, all enveloping, everlasting *now*. And to speak of having chosen us in the past is merely to express a great thought in the imperfect and inadequate language of mankind, "I have chosen you, ye have not chosen me."

Then he lays down a distinction and a characteristic of the people of God : "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." One cannot deny that there is a distinction here, clear, sharp, unmi-stakable, between a body that is commonly called "the Church," or here called "the branches of the vine ;" and a body that is commonly called "the world ;" and that there will be an opposition and antagonism between them to the end. Let us ask ourselves, what is the reason that there are no martyrs now ? What is the reason that the world smiles on the Christian, compliments the Gospel, regards Christianity as a proper and suitable religion, and subscribes with all its heart the strictest creeds that it contains ? Is it that the Church has become more worldly, or is it that the world has become more Christian ? Perhaps it is partly both. The world is baptized, the Church does not hold fast its high and lofty ground ; it has come to terms ; there is concession on both sides, there is compromise on either side ; for if we were what our Master was, the world would probably hate us still ; and if the world be now what it was then, we should feel it our duty to maintain antagonism to that world. You ask, what is the world ? I do not mean by the world its houses, its streets, its buildings, its painting, its poetry, its music — these things may be the handmaids of the Gospel ; there is nothing in literature, there is nothing in science, there is nothing in poetry that is necessarily hostile to Christianity. What I mean by the world is the lust of the eye, the pride of life, the love of this world. Or, let me

define it more strictly, as not the love of things that are unlawful, but the excessive love of things that are lawful. Most men sin not by loving what is positively forbidden, but by over loving what is positively lawful; and the excessive love of a world in itself sinless, that excludes, or damps, or diminishes the love of Christ, is as fatal to the soul as the love of that which is unlawful, sinful, and forbidden.

Our Lord then closes this beautiful chapter with the promise, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." This is the great promise that Christ made to his own before he left them. Now is not this Comforter a Person? How is it possible that the Unitarian can escape the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is a Person, that our Blessed Redeemer is a Person, and that the Father also is a Person? Could it be said that a figure of speech will descend, that a figure of speech will testify, that a figure of speech will bring to remembrance, will be grieved, will instruct, will sanctify? It is nonsense. It is obvious that this Being spoken of is a Person. And here in this verse, you observe, we have Three Persons — the Comforter, the Father, and the Blessed Redeemer that sends that Comforter from the Father. The doctrine of the Trinity is here, not in name — it is not worth while to quarrel about names — but in substance, in reality, and in truth. And this Comforter is first of all the Spirit of truth; "the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth." There is no comfort in a lie; there is, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." The Spirit of comfort is first of all the Spirit of truth; and till he comes into the heart as the Spirit of truth, breaking up all error, he will not abide as the Spirit of comfort, consoling you under all your trials. Then we are told that this blessed Comforter will testify of Christ. Now here is the work of the Spirit. He will not reveal another Gospel, add to the Bible; but he will testify of

Christ ; he will tell you what Christ is. The thought, therefore, in your mind that glorifies the Saviour is the teaching of the Spirit ; the sermon that you hear that glorifies Christ is the teaching of the Spirit ; and that sermon which magnifies the creature, and diminishes the Saviour, — which exalts what man can do, and dims or shades down what Christ has done, is not the teaching and inspiration of the Spirit ; for the Spirit's work is to testify of Christ.

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NOTE. — The vine and branches stand in a much nearer connection than the shepherd and the sheep, or the lord of the vineyard and the vines ; and answer to the Head and members (Eph. v. 23, 30 ; Col. ii. 19), linked together by a common organization, and informed by one and the same life.

[*ἡ ἀληθινή.*] Not only, “by which prophecy is fulfilled ;” not only “in which the organism and qualities of the vine are most nobly realized” (Tholuck) ; but, as in chap. i. 9, original, archetypal. The material creations of God are only inferior examples of that finer spiritual life and organism in which the creature is raised up to partake of the Divine nature ; only *ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν*, Heb. ix. 24 ; *ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρ.* ib. 23 ; see chap. vi. 32.

[*ὁ γεωργός.*] Not only the tiller of the land, but the vine-planter and dresser ; He who has originated the relation between the vine and branches, by planting the vine in this earth, (the nature of man,) and who looks for and insures the bringing forth of fruit. — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER XVI.

APOSTLES YET UNENLIGHTENED. — CANDOR OF JESUS. — SORROW AT CHRIST'S DEPARTURE. — SPIRIT'S WORK. — PROPHECY. — PRAYER.

THERE are two or three leading thoughts it is essential to keep in mind, in order to understand the continuity and the reason of the remarks in this chapter. It was after the first communion ever celebrated upon earth, that our Lord addressed the little group that were around that table, in the words of the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of this Gospel. The text that he took, if I may use the expression, was, "Let not your hearts be troubled;" and you will find that every statement contained in these three chapters is each a reason why their hearts should not be troubled because he was about to go to the Father, and to leave them alone. And secondly, you must understand that the disciples, even with the personal teaching of our blessed Lord, remained till the day of Pentecost in a comparatively unenlightened state. They constantly blundered, they constantly misapprehended the nature of his kingdom and his coming glory; and he as constantly, and with unwearied patience, taught them, line upon line, correcting their errors, and making their very errors the background from which he threw out the most magnificent and precious truths. In this chapter, therefore, you will find remarks made by the apostles which indicate a comparatively unenlightened condition. In the next place, you will notice in this chapter the candor, if I may use an expression so obvious, of our blessed Lord. If our Lord had been a mere pretender, he never would have shown his followers the dark side of things. He would have pictured

the future all brilliancy, their progress all conquest, and never have hinted to them the possibility of suffering for the Saviour's sake. But as you observe here, with a candor the most transparent, he tells them that tribulation, and bonds, and imprisonment, awaited them; nay, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think he doeth God service." Now no one dependent on pretence for progress would have ever hazarded such a prophecy. But the very fact that he did so, shows that he claimed their adhesion on the ground of conviction and on no other. He says, I ask you to adhere to me, not for the sake of temporal reward, but because your own judgments, your own hearts, your own consciences attest the divinity of my mission, the justice and the truthfulness of my claims. It is truth with martyrdom in preference to error with all the prosperity that this world can give you. "These things I have told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them;" and you may learn how truly I spoke, how candidly I delineated the future, and how I saw the future as transparently as I see the present, when I told you what awaited you. "Now sorrow has filled your hearts, because I go away." That was the ground of their grief; they felt that the central column around which they had clustered and clung, and found a protection and a shelter, was about to be removed. They now feared and felt that the shadow of that tree under which they had sat so sweetly and securely, was about to be withdrawn; sorrow filled their hearts at the prospective loss of so dear a Master, so beloved a Saviour, so precious and so patient a Friend. But he says to them, "What you look upon as calamity is really blessing, if you can see it in its right light. My departure to the Father will not be desolation to you, but a blessing unspeakable and full of glory." So it is with our worst trials. The darkest night has a bright side: the severest trial has blessings in its bosom. We are prone to look upon the sad side, and mourn; a little more

impartiality will teach us to look on the bright side, that smiles may mingle with our tears, and joy mitigate our sorrow. And he tells them the ground of this now. He says, "It is expedient that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The constant promise of the Saviour was One to supply his place; and that One to supply his place only till he should come again. The Spirit is not the lasting substitute for Christ's personal presence, but the temporary substitute. And when Christ comes himself, the Spirit's work shall be completed and done. And how very interesting the view he gives of that Spirit! He is called "the Comforter" — literally, the Paraclete or Advocate — one that speaks for you where a word in season will have great power; one who has weight, and authority, and influence, and can make your case known, represent your condition, and secure for you the precise help that you stand in need of. "It is therefore expedient that I go; for when I go I will send him unto you." And when he is come, what will he do? He will not only reprove — for that is too mild a translation, — but he will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. This will be the world's great sin, that the Spirit will bring home to the world's hard heart, namely, that they refuse to believe on him. And he will convict the world of righteousness; a righteousness for them, and unto all that believe; the bequest of him who has gone to the Father. And of judgment to come, by seeing the earnest of it now in that the prince of this world — that is Satan — is judged and cast down.

He then tells them, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." He taught them as they were able to bear. And therefore we may expect that after Pentecost, when their minds were disciplined and prepared for ampler instruction, he then taught them greater and more glorious things, as they were able to bear them.

“When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.” Now mark; this Divine Person is called, first, the Comforter; next the Spirit of Truth. And what does this teach us? That there can only be comfort in the truth. A falsehood gives “Peace, peace;” the truth gives the peace that passeth understanding. You need, therefore, to know your real moral and spiritual condition, by the teaching of the Spirit. He brings before you the delight, the joy, and the satisfaction of true conversion, by knowing the Spirit of Truth as the Comforter in your hearts. “And when the Spirit is come, he will guide you into all truth.” Into *all* truth. That does not mean every truth. The Spirit does not teach man astronomy: excellent Christians are often bad astronomers; spiritually taught believers are not always taught geology; and therefore, when it says that the Spirit will lead you into all truth, it means all truth essential to your salvation. And the Holy Spirit does not teach us all the truths that relate to discipline. Thus Christians differ, and have differed, and will differ to the end, not in vital matters, but in circumstantial details. But we may expect that the Spirit will lead us into all the truth that relates to the safety of the soul, to the glory of God, and to the path that conducts to heaven. And hence, in the original, it is so, — “He will lead you into all *the* truth;” meaning essential truth; “for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.” Now what a remarkable promise is here: the Holy Spirit is promised to show you things to come. But does that mean that he will make every true Christian a prophet? Not at all. Many of the apostles were not; but this promise is not special and peculiar to the apostles, but applicable to all true Christians in all ages of the Christian Church. Then how will he show you things to come? Not by enabling you to prophesy, but by opening up to you more clearly that which he has written.



Some people will read all the Bible except the prophecies; but really that is taking up Roman Catholic ground, it is not Protestant ground. If there be one truth that is more fixed and absolute than another, it is that all Scripture is given by inspiration, and all Scripture is profitable; and more than that, there is a special promise of a special blessing on him that reads and understands the things that are written in the prophecies of this Book; and there is a promise given, that "the Spirit will show you things to come," as those things to come are written in his own inspired and blessed Word. Whilst, therefore, we are not to dogmatize in trying to ascertain the things of the future, we are not to rush into the opposite extreme, and shut our eyes and exclude from our study the predictions of the future altogether.

It is a very strange thing that one can scarcely ever speak of unfulfilled prophecy, or of what seems to us to be probably its meaning, without one starting up and saying, "Oh, such a divine says the end of the world is to be in such a year; and such another interpreter of prophecy says Christ is to come on such a day." Now, all this is leaping to conclusions for which there is no warrant. One can show what is clearly recorded in prophecy; one can show what is the most probable meaning of that prophecy, — and as the end comes nearer, the prophecy will become plainer, — without assuming the prophet's function, and predicting where we can only proclaim what God has predicted before. It is one thing, as I have told you, to foretell future events; it is quite another thing to foretell the predictions of them contained in God's blessed Word. As the age rolls onward to its conclusion, those things that were hidden or mistaken ten years, twenty years, a hundred years before, will become plainer, distincter, more unmistakable; and I am sure that we are now in this year in a position to explain unfulfilled prophecy far more advantageous than any that preceded us. I think it may now be conceded, without

a doubt, that the sixth vial has either been poured out, or is pouring out. I stated in 1848, that it was then trembling in the angel's hand; from conclusions gathered from the written Word, we saw that the sixth vial was then about to be poured down. Now read the newspapers, read the speeches made at different religious meetings; and you will find noblemen, statesmen, Christian ministers, all regarding it as a fact that the river Euphrates is drying up, that the Mahometan power is rapidly ceasing to be a power, and likely to be absorbed in what will be far better, — a Christian dynasty occupying the place that has been overshadowed by a miserable superstition for so many hundred years before.

We do not undertake this war into which we have been plunged, — a war which everybody feels, and we are thankful they do feel, to be proper; a war undertaken in defence of the weak against the fierce devastating ambition of the Russian Autocrat, — we do not go to Turkey in order to prop up Mahometanism, or to try and make the Crescent endure a little longer; we go to protect a nation from the oppressor, and to shelter ourselves from the consequences of the success of that oppressor. All this is perfectly reasonable, and does not identify us with the support of Mahometanism. If I were to see the Pope of Rome insulted on the streets of London, treated by a mob in a savage and cruel manner, I should feel it my duty to interpose, protect him with all my might, and conduct him to the nearest place of shelter and safety. But you would not say therefore that I want to support the pope, or to prop up the popedom: I only want to do justly, to love mercy, and to feel sympathy with the oppressed, whatever be his creed or character. And besides, it is very important to observe, that whatever be the clear indications of prophecy in reference to the future, those indications are not to direct our duties. Many persons say, "Oh, you gather from prophecy that the

Russian power will yet reach Palestine." Well, suppose you do. Then, instantly the critic in the newspaper says, "Then how can you pray that the English shall be victorious?" I answer, it was predicted that the Jews should crucify our Lord; but if I had seen them about to commit that awful crime, I should have protested against it. It is stated in prophecy that the Jew is to be a scoff and a by-word, that he is to be spit upon; but I am not, therefore, to go and insult him, and persecute him. Our duties are to be governed by plain precepts, not by unfulfilled prophecy; the God who has recorded the prophecy will see to its fulfilment. The precepts that I read I am bound carefully and patiently to obey. Come to the plain prescriptions to regulate your conduct; interpret the prophecies as God may give you light, and the Spirit may enable you to do so; but remember, duty is the result of obedience to precept; patience and hope are the graces that spring from the knowledge of prophecy.

The Spirit thus is promised to show you things to come. Another attribute of the Spirit is, "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Then some of his disciples evidently misunderstood him, and could not understand what he said, when he told them, "a little while." They said, "What is this that he saith." Then Jesus explained what he meant by it. "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful; but you have a bright reversion of joy,—your sorrow shall be turned into joy." He shows that this dispensation is the season of travail and of sorrow; that in the age to come the man child shall appear, spoken of in the book of Revelation, who shall reign from sea to sea. And then their sorrow, and the tears and the travail of the Church that has been waiting eighteen hundred years for her Lord, shall be turned into joy, for he that is prom-

ised comes to sway his sceptre over a reclaimed and a regenerated world.

He then urges them in very earnest terms to ask. Prayer is his great prescription; prayer, he says, that never is lifted up without an answer, — is best and most expedient for you. He tells them, “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.” Now, this text could not prove the Deity of Christ; but if a single Unitarian read these lines, I submit the difficulty, How can you explain this statement, on the supposition that Christ was a mere man, “I came forth from the Father — I go to the Father?” His going to the Father, and leaving this world, and his coming forth from the Father, surely proves antecedent existence to his appearance upon earth; and if it does not prove what other texts prove, — his Deity, — it proves unequivocally his preëxistence.

He tells them, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace;” peace in Christ, — peace in his precious blood, — peace in his glorious promise; and if you have it not in me, you will have it nowhere else; for “in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, the world shall not master you. It is a beaten world; I have conquered it; and because I have overcome, you shall overcome in my strength also.”

## CHAPTER XVI. 33.

PEACE, NOT IN CHRIST'S WORDS, BUT IN CHRIST. — PEACE IN SPITE OF THE WORLD. — THROUGH TRUTH. — THE PRODUCT OF TRUTHS STATED BY OUR LORD. — CHRIST IS GOD. — THE WORLD PERSECUTES TO THE END. — IN CHRIST IS PEACE TO THE END.

THE last verse in this chapter is the epitome and end of three chapters: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace."

"The 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of the Gospel according to St. John, was the discourse given by our blessed Redeemer immediately after the celebration of the first communion that was ever celebrated on earth. These three chapters constitute an eloquent post-communion address. The whole of that address, so beautiful, so instructive, was all spoken by our blessed Lord to his sorrowing and yet rejoicing disciples, with this definite and distinct end in view, that in him they might have peace. Our Lord never spoke merely to gratify curiosity or to unfold the splendors of a lofty and abstract speculative eloquence. All he said, and preached, and promised, was to lead the hearts of his people to himself, that they might find in him what they could not find in a surrounding world — the peace that passeth understanding. We discover, too, from this inference, that Jesus contemplated the happiness of his people in all ages, not only as possible, but as what really and truly belonged to them. "I have spoken these things," he says, "that in me ye may have," — what I design you to have, what it is my desire and prayer to your Father in heaven,

that you may have — “peace.” Not peace from the world ; but peace in spite of the world, and in Him who has conquered the world, and bids you, therefore, not fear its smiles or its threats, its promises or its pleasures. It is evident, from these words of our blessed Lord, that a convulsed and agitated state of the world would be its condition till the end of the age. What he spoke to them he spoke to us and to all ; and he says, “ In me ye may have peace ; in the world ye shall have tribulation.” This is true to the end of time. It is not the characteristic of an age, or of a peculiar condition of the world ; it is its brand to the end, that it hates the people of God. And it is one of the characteristics that define sharply and clearly the true character of the people of God, that whilst they are persecuted from the world, and driven from it by the storm, they find peace in Christ, and enjoy therein everlasting and blessed rest. Even Christ’s precious and blessed words are not to be to us the springs of peace. He does not say here, “ These things have I spoken unto you,” — and more musical, more comforting things were never spoken by lips, human or divine, — he does not say, “ These things have I spoken unto you that in these things ye may have peace ;” but, as if to show how truly Christianity is personal connection between a living man and a living Lord, he says, “ These things have I spoken, not that in these things, but in me who have spoken these things, ye may have peace.” Our peace is not to spring from justification by faith, nor from sanctification by the Spirit, nor from the most thrilling promises, nor the most joyous hopes ; but from Christ the Fountain. And the truth that brings you to him, the sermon that shows you that he alone can satisfy every want and meet every possible desire — these are words and sermons that are owned and blessed of God. We gather from this, that the peace of a Christian is not in the future, but in the present. He does not say, “ These things have I spoken unto you,

that hereafter in heaven ye may have peace ;” but, “ These things have I spoken unto you that in me ” — at this very moment — “ ye may have peace.” Peace, therefore, is not the object of faith, nor is it the object of hope ; but the peculiar privilege of a present possession. Peace with God, and peace in Christ, is the believer’s inheritance now by sense and blessed experience ; not the believer’s hope hereafter, as a thing only then to be attained.

This peace is to be amidst conflict, and in spite of conflict ; peace in the prospect of death ; peace amid the footfall of the approaching Judge ; peace while Sinai thunders and lightens, and the conscience is shrinking from the one and the other ; peace amidst all the agitations and convulsions of a world that has gone from God. Ye shall have peace in Christ if all should be chaos, confusion, and uproar about you. It is not true that a Christian is to have peace from an improved world, but peace in Christ in spite of a persecuting world. But the best way to show the full force of this inference of our Lord, is to give some of the grounds of that inference, as these are contained in his sermon which he preached. And if you will read at your leisure, (and I know not a more comforting, or a more blessed, or a more interesting study,) the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of this Gospel, you will see that every text, or at least every distinct topic that the Saviour touches, is a reason, or is one of those things spoken of by him for this definite end, that in him ye may have peace. Let us try to make the experiment, and see if it be not so. He begins his discourse, his post-communion sermon, by saying, “ Ye believe in God,” — you are now theists — “ believe also in me,” in whom God is found, not the consuming fire, as on Mount Sinai, or in the bush ; not the unknown God of the Gentile ; but God your Father, manifest by me, just while he justifies them that believe. Therefore, in me ye may have peace. “ Let not your heart be troubled.” This truth I tell you that in

me, in whom God is seen to be a Father forgiving the sins of his people, ye may have peace. Again, he says, "In my Father's house are many mansions," or resting-places; "I go to prepare a place for you." Therefore, amidst the trials, the griefs, the disappointments of the world, look up; think of the blessed fact, that I who am going to die for you, am also going to heaven; not to be absorbed with the joys that are there, but to spend the next eighteen centuries in getting ready a place for you. Now this I tell you, that in me ye may have peace. I am not to leave you for ever, but "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." Blessed hope! I do not leave you orphans; I do not abandon you to the bosom of a cold and an unsympathizing world; you will have tribulation for a season, you will be tossed in a stormy and tempestuous passage; but I will come in the fourth watch, I will say to the rude waves and to the wild winds, "Peace, be still;" and this promise I have made to you, that in me ye may have peace.

Then again, he tells them, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." I am the way by which you climb to heaven; I am the truth, or the lamp that shines upon the pilgrims, as they tread that upward way; and I am the life, inspiring them with energy to tread it. And if I be the way by which you walk, the truth that guides you, the life that inspires you, and there be no other way of coming to heaven but by me, then be not troubled; I tell you this, that in me, the way, the truth, and the life, ye may have peace. Philip said, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I am the brightness of his glory; all that can be seen of God, all that can be known of God, is to be seen and known in me. The page of nature is marred, mutilated, torn; sin has stained it, and the rude passions of mankind have torn it. But my face, once so marred, now radiant with the glory into which



I have entered, is to my Father what the dial-plate is to the movements within; you can see in my tears the compassion of a God; you can see in my miracles the beneficence of God; you can see in all I say the mind of God; you can see in all I have suffered the love of God. "He that hath seen me," — on the cross, in Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, in the manger, — "hath seen the Father!" And this I speak unto you, that in me ye may have peace. And again he says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." — "*Whatsoever* ye shall ask in my name." He does not say, first ascertain that God means to give what you ask; first ascertain whether it will be agreeable to God's mind to give what you feel you need: no such thing; but, "Whatsoever ye shall ask." I do not believe in such a thing as a fervent prayer offered in the name of Jesus unanswered, either for ourselves or for others. True, you may not see the answer, you may not hear the echo of that answer; you may not be able to trace it out in those you have prayed for, or in yourself: but rest assured God has answered the prayer, not in the way that you expect, not in the way that you would wish, nor at the time that you have fixed, but in the way God sees to be best — in the measure that he knows to be for his glory, and at the time when you will feel the blessing, and give glory to Him that bestows it. We are, therefore, to ask whatsoever we feel that we want. Are you sick? — ask for health. Are you in danger? — pray to God for safety. Are you poor? — pray to God that he would give you a little more of this world's good things. Why should you not? Do not say, money is a bad thing: it is not so; it is a most excellent thing. It is not the thing, it is not the best thing, it is not to be looked to as if it were the chief thing; but in its place, and in the hand of an enlightened and a sanctified man, it represents ten thousand temporal blessings that man must appreciate whilst he continues to

live : and, therefore, ask these things. Does a child hesitate to ask what it feels it needs ? It sometimes asks things that would injure it, if they were given. It may ask the knife that would cut it if it were to receive it. The parent judges ; but the child, with all the confiding sympathy that a child, however young, has to a parent, asks just what it wants. “If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father which is in heaven give good things unto them that ask him ? ”

“These things, therefore, have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.”

Again he says, “And when I go away from you, I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.” He reveals what this Comforter is to do. “He shall teach you all things — bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Now, says the Saviour, I have spoken to you, and told you this blessed promise, that in me ye may have peace. Do not be disturbed because I leave you ; I am going to send down to you One who will take my place until I return and take possession of all things. And this Comforter that I will send to you will be another Comforter. I have been one, and he will be another Comforter. And what will he do ? “He will,” first of all, “teach you all things.” Not all things in the sense that he will teach you philosophy, mathematics, science, and astronomy ; but that he will teach you all the things, as it is in the original, that I have been speaking about. “And he will bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” I have spoken these things to you, that in me ye may have peace. But not only will your Bible contain them, but your memory will need to retain them. Well, this blessed Comforter, who is to take my place during my temporary absence, will improve your memory as well as enlighten your mind and sanctify your heart. When you hear one

say, "I have a bad memory, and cannot recollect spiritual things;" say, there is a Great Improver of the memory, — the Holy Spirit. And Christ has told us of him, that in him who has made the promise you may have peace.

And then he concludes the chapter with his legacy, — "Peace I leave you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And all this he says, I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.

The next chapter is just a continuation or thread of the same bright and sparkling pearls. I cannot enter upon all, but I may touch on one, two, or three. He says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; every branch in me that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit;" and therefore if you are not so fertile as you ought to be in all the fruits, the fragrant fruits, of the Spirit, do not let that trouble you; be distressed that you are not more fruitful, but do not despair, for I will come and purge, or cleanse, or prune, the branch: and this I speak to you, that in me ye may have peace. And again, he tells them, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you;" — "For the joy set before him he endured the cross;" — "and that your joy may be full." And this "I speak to you, that in me ye may have peace." "I call you not servants, but I have called you friends!" What a blessed relationship! — Christ the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother; and the lowliest orphan, and the poorest widow, recognized in heaven as a friend of Christ. The grandeur of your relationship, the dignity of your *status*, the nobility of which you have the patent, are declared in these verses, and you are told of them, that in me ye may have peace.

And as to the persecutions you will meet with from the world, he says, "Marvel not if the world hate you;" do not be surprised at it; "if ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but

I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And do you grieve that I am going away? Do not grieve; it is expedient for you that I go away. You do not think so; you are arguing among yourselves, "The pillar against which we have leaned will be struck down, the lamp that has shone upon our path will be extinguished. Our Teacher, our Master, our Friend, our Saviour, "is about to forsake us." Do not be grieved; all this is most expedient. It is expedient for you that I go away; I go to prepare a place for you. I go to send the Comforter down to you. I go to that lofty point or position from which I can see all things in heaven and on earth, and take the management of all that relates to you and concerns you. And besides, at present, I am but the lamp of a nation; raised to heaven I shall be the sun in the sky. Visible among you, the apostles, I am but a tiny spring in Palestine; raised to heaven, I am the fountain of the wide world opened for sin and for all uncleanness among all. And all this I speak unto you, that in me ye may have peace.

"Hitherto ye have asked nothing; ask, and ye shall receive." And this I have spoken to you, that in me ye might have peace.

The whole of the three chapters, therefore, consist of a series of grounds, or reasons, why the Christian should have and enjoy everlasting peace in Christ. Now the inference I draw from this is, first, the great importance of acquaintance with the words of Christ — "Sanctify them through thy truth:" that is, in contact with thy truth; and the larger the surface of truth with which the believer is in contact, the more he will be sanctified by God the Spirit. The Spirit regenerates the heart, sanctifies the nature; not without truth, not in spite of truth, but by the instrumentality of the truth as it is in God's holy word. So in the same manner peace — that peace that makes the heart beat calm amidst a convulsed world; that peace that preserves the countenance

unruffled when the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea ; that peace that makes the Christian so full of self-possession and indomitable quiet in a world agitated, alarmed, afraid, whilst it is the gift of God in Christ, is given through the knowledge of the words of Christ ; for, “ these words have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace.” Therefore to study, to know, to recollect, to feel, to have impressed upon the conscience, God’s word, is to have the medium of our sanctification on the one hand, and the element of the peace that passeth understanding on the other hand. In the second place, we gather from all this an evidence, indirect it may be, but no less conclusive on that account, that Christ is God. Who said there is no peace in the height nor in the depth ; no peace in splendid promise nor in glorious type ; in church or in sacrament, in castle, in battlement, and bulwark, or in victory, or in national power — who said so ? One that knew the emptiness of all. And where did he say you will have peace ? Peace in him. Can he be only man to whom every human being is to look ; in whose heart of hearts every human being is to have peace ? Can he be a mere creature who is to fill all the cisterns of humanity, and to give peace to all the weary troubled hearts that beat in this weary and troubled world ? No, no : if he were man, I could not believe that text to be true ; but, because he is God, I know that he is as able as he is willing to give the peace that passeth understanding to all that stand in need of it.

We see here also in the next place, that Christianity by the grace of God in this dispensation is not meant to alter the outer world. Whilst the dispensation of the Spirit lasts, Christians will be in the world, — not of the world, — and a Christian’s peace will be enjoyed in spite of the world, not derived from, or felt in consequence of, the world. “ In the world ye shall have tribulation.” Now, that is just as true as that, “ In me ye shall have peace ; ” I say it is just as

much the ordinance of God that you shall have tribulation in the world, as it is the ordinance of God that you shall have peace in Christ. It is because it is the ordinance and the will of God, that the apostle Peter says, in one of his Epistles, Think it no strange thing that such trials or afflictions have happened to you. It is not a strange thing; it is part and parcel of the economy under which you live; it is one of the great laws of God's moral government. It is just as much a law of Heaven that you shall have tribulation inner or outer in the world, as it is a law of the same Divine economy that you shall have peace in Christ; just as in the fourth commandment it is as much a law of God that "Six days shalt thou labor," as it is a law of God that one day in seven shall you rest. The working man upon the working day is as much a Divine Institution as the worshipping man upon the worshipping day; and he that tries to repeal the one or the other breaks in upon the existing comfort of man and the institution of God. So here, tribulation in the world, war with nations, war at home in your country, in your parish, in your family; or if not there, in your own hearts, your passions, your prejudices; losses, crosses, bereavements, disappointments, vexations, ten thousand ills and aches, these the poet said, and he only unfolded the ordinance of God in his grand language when he said so, these are "ills and aches that flesh is heir to;" that is to say, "In the world ye shall have tribulation:" the original of Shakspeare's sentiment. "In me ye shall have peace:" that is the expression of Christ's divine command. It is not implied here that the Christian should not feel this tribulation. The grace of Christ in a Christian's heart is not the extinction of human sensibility, but the extinction of cowardice and cowardly fear. In the world ye shall not only have tribulation, but you must feel it. If you did not feel it, you would not be human; if you did not triumph over it, because in Christ you have peace, you would not be Christians. To weep and

to feel pain is the mark of a man. We are not made of cast-iron, nor are we chiselled from the granite rock. We have nerves, instinct with sensibility; and we must feel. And no man rises to a loftier level when he gets beyond the range of feeling, and approximates to the insensibility of the Stoic. But though we feel the tribulation that the world afflicts us withal, we are to enjoy in spite of it, and triumphant over it, the peace that passeth understanding that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore, when you become a Christian, and have God's grace and Christ's peace in your heart, do not expect the world will cease to be troublesome; sickness does not keep aloof from you any more than from atheists and infidels. You lose your wives, your husbands, your children, your fathers, your mothers, just the same as other people. The outward world is the same to you as it is to the heathen or the Mahometan, or the Jew; but you have, in your own inner world, a compensatory life that makes you triumph over the world; and what overwhelms the man of the world till he rushes to commit suicide, only enables you to burst into the triumphant Christian song, "Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; though the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; though the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet I will joy in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." For these things hath he spoken unto me that his joy may be in me, and that my joy may be full; and while in the world I shall have tribulation, in Christ my Saviour I shall have perfect peace.

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NOTE. — (Ver. 8.) These three words, *ἁμαρτία, δικαιοσύνη, κρίσις*, comprehend the three great steps of advance in spiritual truth among men. Of itself the world does not know what sin is, what righteousness is, what judgment is; nor can either of these be revealed to any man, ex-

cept by the Spirit of God working within him. Each man's conscience on each of these ; — some consciousness of guilt, some sense of right, some power of judgment of what is transitory and worthless ; but all these are unreal and unpractical, till the *ἐλεγχος* of the Spirit has wrought in him. (See Stier, v. 360.)

(Ver. 9.) And the great opening of sin to the world is to show them that its root and essence is unbelief in Christ as the Son of God. Unbelief : for mankind, being alien from God by nature, the first step towards their recovery must be to lay hold on that only safety which he has provided for them ; and that laying hold is faith, and the not doing it, when revealed and placed before them, is sin. Beforetime it was also unbelief : “ The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God ; ” but now, — for we can only believe as God has revealed himself, — it is unbelief in Christ the Son of God ; the *οὐ θέλετε ἔρχεσθαι πρὸς με*. See this pointedly asserted, 1 John v. 10–12. Remember, this unbelief is not a want of historical faith, but unbelief in its very root ; which, whenever the Spirit has “ opened his commission,” by the planting of the visible Church, is the condemning sin of the world. — *Alford*.



## CHAPTER XVII.

THE INTERCESSOR. — JESUS IS GOD. — LATENT PROOFS OF HIS DEITY.  
— PRE-EXISTENCE OF CHRIST. — IN THE WORLD AND OUT OF IT. —  
GOD'S WORD IS TRUTH. — EVIDENCE OF GEOLOGY. — "FATHER, I  
WILL." — EMPLOYMENT OF THE BLESSED.

PERHAPS it may be strictly and literally said, this is the sublimest and the most instructive chapter in all the four Gospels. It is not so much a prayer uttered upon earth for those who were to continue on it, but a specimen of Christ's intercession carried on within the veil in the midst of heaven for all that believe in his name, even to the end of the world. On the earth he died for us as an atonement; at the Father's right hand he intercedes for us as our High-priest. What he purchased by his blood below, he makes good by his intercession above. If he had not died for us, we should have had no right to heaven; if he did not intercede for us, we should never embrace that right to heaven. But because he died we are entitled to heaven; because he lives for us we shall be kept from falling, and presented faultless before his presence in glory with exceeding joy.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven," — that is, to the place where God is; not the geographical relation *above*, but the moral relation and the moral aspect, looking upward to the place where God's throne immediately is, — "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee." No creature could so pray — "Glorify me." A creature needs to be humbled, to be laid low; but never, except in the height of pride, and arrogance, and ambition,

can a creature pray that it may be glorified. The very fact that Jesus said, "Glorify me," indirectly teaches the other fact which we know to be true, that Jesus was God over all.

He says, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh" — it is literally, *jurisdiction*, official government — "that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Now, could that be said of a creature? I want particularly to notice these points; because the Socinian quotes some broad assertions that are contained in the pages of Scripture, which are most true, namely, that Jesus was man; we are apt to quote in retaliation or reply certain texts, which as unequivocally assert that he was God. But a far more striking proof that Christ is God, is that latent evidence that runs through all the chapters of the New Testament, breaks out at intervals where the topic is not in immediate discussion, and implies that he is God rather than broadly and distinctly asserts it. Take this one passage, "Thou hast given him power (or jurisdiction) over all flesh; that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Could this be said of a creature? Could an apostle, could an evangelist, assume to give eternal life? Not one. And therefore he that claimed the prerogative of giving life, however limited the recipients of the gift may be, was none less than God over all, blessed for evermore. Nor is the next text less unequivocal proof. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." To say it is eternal life to know God and the apostle Paul would be absurd; or, eternal life to know thee the only living and true God, and the evangelists or John the Baptist. We recoil from it; the very statement refutes itself. The fact, therefore, that eternal life is inseparably connected with the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, is evidence that Jesus Christ is not a mere man, but that he is, what he assumes to be, the brightness of the glory of the Father; and that as "ye have

believed in God," it is the necessary duty that instantly follows, to "believe also in me."

He says in the next verse, "I have glorified thee on the earth." Can we say so? Alas! every day's confession must be, "We have grieved thee; we have dishonored thee; we have sinned against thee." Then who is this who could say at the close of his biography, "I have glorified thee?" Who is this that could say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do?" Why, we are constrained to say, "We have left unfinished, or undone, the things we ought to have done;" but he could say, in the language of absolute truth, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self," — what wonderful language! — "with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." I will not here assert, though I might, that this text proves that Christ was God; but what else can we understand by such words as these, "The glory which I had with thee before the world was created?" I have no doubt that this orb, this round ball on which we tread, whilst its present configuration, furniture, arrangement, is about six thousand years old, as an orb existed perhaps hundreds of thousands of years ago. Well then, if that be true, Christ was with God before this earth was created. I do not say this proves his Deity, but it is a very great step towards it — it proves his preëxistence; and if he was more than man, we naturally ask the Unitarian, what was he? Not an angel, not an archangel. You will find that there is no consistency anywhere but in the conclusion that he was God, and in the conclusion that he became also man.

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." Here is Christ's work — declaring God as the Father; here is God's gift, that all believers are given to him out of the world. "Thine they were; and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy

word." "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them." And then he prays for them. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world." I do not think that the construction that some very severe Calvinists put upon this is proper. They say that we have nothing to do with the world — that Christ never prayed for it; I think, whether this be true or false, this text does not prove it. This is his intercessory prayer within the veil; it is as the Head of all believers that he is speaking, and therefore only of his own people; he is praying here only for his own people, and not for the world. But still, in the world are thousands who are not yet Christians, except in the purposes of God; and by and by they will emerge from the world, and believe the gospel, and profess that truth which now they are ignorant of. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world," — that is, now, in this intercessory prayer — "but for them whom thou hast given me; for they are thine." But what is meant by the tenth verse — "All mine are thine?" Well, a creature could say that; "all that I have is thine." But what follows? "And thine are mine;" no creature could say this: "and I am glorified in them." He then says, "I am no more in the world" — as he had told them before — "I go to the Father." But then he prays for those left behind. "Holy Father;" how beautiful is that phrase! "Father;" therefore we are the sons of God. "Holy Father;" sinners as we are, now become sons, it is yet consistent with thy holiness that we should be so; "keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name; and now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." He then says, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." That is the prayer that is applicable to every true Christian.

Christ does not pray that we may be taken out of the world; and every attempt to take ourselves out of the world is either monkish or suicidal; that is, unscriptural and wrong. Christ's prayer is, that Christians while in the world may be kept from its evil, and be the lights of the world; that others, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven. We never ought to forget that our position is assigned us in providence; and that we are not at liberty to leave that position any more than the soldier or sentinel is to leave the post that is assigned him; but in it, through God's strength, we are to do the duties that devolve upon us; and there, not elsewhere, to glorify our Father in heaven. And this verse seems to be utterly fatal to all conventual and monkish institutions. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world." Ask a monk what explains his position. His answer will be, "I was afraid of the world's sin; and therefore I came out of it, that I might worship God as I could desire;" that is his explanation of it. But is that compatible with our Lord's prayer — "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world?" Supposing that a convent is *extra-mundane*, out of the world, which is a very questionable thing, then to run out of the world to escape from the trials of the world, is to traverse and to contradict the very words of our Lord, that in the world we should remain, that we may be the lights, the blessings, and the benefactors of the world. Suppose that everybody were to have the monkish desire, what would be the result? That all the salt of the earth would leave it, and it would go to corruption; that all the lights of the world would be quenched, and it would be consigned to darkness. It does seem to me, that the better a man is, the more Christian a lady is, the more need the world has of them, not the more imperative it is upon him or her to go out of the world. If you be Christians, you are just the very people that the world wants; and to go out of it is to

do what God forbids. And if you be not Christians, to go into a convent to get Christianity is much worse, you may depend upon it, than continuing where you are. Where you are you may attain it, whither you will go you have no chance of getting it at all. It seems, therefore, obvious that the true duty of a Christian is to remain where Providence has placed him. If you are a soldier, you can serve God as a soldier; if you be a sailor, you can serve him as a sailor; if you be a member of parliament you can serve God there; if you be a tradesman, or a merchant, or a lawyer, or a physician, you can serve God thus. And you will find it invariably true, that the man that cannot serve God just where he is, never would serve him better if he were where he would be. And very often, the wish to change our place in order to be religious, as it is called, is simply a lazy wish to get out of difficulties that we will not manfully grapple with, and to get into smoother water, where we think we shall have less trouble, under the pretence that we shall be more religious. The prayer is, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those that thou hast given me. I do not pray that thou wouldest take them out of the world; but I pray that thou wouldest keep them from its evil," whatever that evil is, the evil of the world.

He prays, in the next place, in words that show the process through which a Christian is sanctified, "Sanctify them through thy truth." The Holy Spirit is the author of sanctification. God's truth is the medium of it. And therefore the means of sanctification is contact and acquaintance with God's truth; the reading of his word, the hearing of it preached, — that is the means of sanctification. "Thy word is truth." What a blessed thought! God's word is truth. The evidence that this book is the inspiration of God is greater, more varied, more conclusive, than the evidence for any one fact that ever occurred in the world. It is much easier — it is not an extravagant statement, but a sober

truth — it is much easier, as Archbishop Whateley has done in his own powerful and conclusive manner, to prove that no such personage as Napoleon or Shakspeare ever existed, than it is to prove that this book is not the Book of God.

You will always find that the Bible is ahead of every thing. In the last century, when some excavations were made in the pyramids, infidels leaped to the conclusion, that there was a contradiction between history and the Bible. A little patience showed that there was not only perfect harmony, but that the interior contents of the pyramids of Pharaoh were the most resplendent proofs of the inspiration of Moses. And so the notion was taken up by some people from the discovery of certain contents of the globe — petrifactions and animals evidently of another dynasty — that the Mosaic account was wrong. But the more geologists have studied their science, and the more soberly we have compared God's written page with the earth's stony and geological page, the more conclusive has been the evidence that the Bible is perfectly true. And so with every fact. The excavations made by Layard in Nineveh have cast light upon the sacred Volume, upon its age, upon its authenticity, its genuineness, and the accuracy of its historic statements. Nothing seems more striking than this, that a buried capital should rise from its grave, and proclaim, trumpet-tongued, "O God, thy word is truth." And we may say, "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if a city should rise from the dead and say God's word is truth."

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me." — Now just mark that prayer. Could you, could I, could a saint, could an apostle say, "Father, I will?" No; but here is a personage who stands between heaven and earth, and says, "Father, I will" — the fiat of a God, not the petition of a lowly and a suffering creature — "I will

that those thou hast given me be with me ;” that is heaven. Now one does not care where heaven is. When we speak of heaven being up, and hell being down, we use popular language : every one knows that what is up at twelve o’clock at midnight is down at twelve o’clock at noonday. Geographically looked at, *up* and *down* are mere phrases ; these expressions are meant to denote, that up above all thought, above all imagination, above all the din, the turmoil, the taint of this world, is enthroned One, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for ever. And if we be with Christ, it matters not where heaven is. I do not see why this world cannot be heaven ; there is nothing in it to prevent its being made so. You have only to remove sin from it ; you have only to let it be consecrated by the descending footstep of him that redeemed it ; you have only to have Christ in it and us with him ; and, that must be everlasting and joyous heaven. The occupation of heaven is, “That they may behold my glory.” His glory shines from the plants, and flowers, and fruits of the earth ; it shines from innumerable stars strewn through the depths and heights of infinitude ; it shines from the cross, and evidences the love that gave him to die for us, and the mercy that had pity upon us when there was no eye to pity us.



## CHAPTER XVII. 17.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION. — SANCTIFICATION, ITS MEANING. — TRUTH THE INSTRUMENT. — GOD THE AUTHOR. — IMPORTANCE OF HEARING TRUTH. — TRUTH SET FORTH IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE seventeenth verse of this chapter is worthy of special analysis. It is as follows: — “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.”

Sanctification is one of those great truths defined in the Gospel, but frequently misapprehended by some, and confounded with another fundamental doctrine by others. Justification is totally distinct from sanctification; and yet the one is never in the individual severed in practice from the other. Justification is an act, a judicial act, done at once, done for ever, incapable of increase, and beyond the possibility of decrease. Justified at all you are justified absolutely from all things from which you could not be justified by the law. Sanctification is a work or a process that goes on from degree to degree, till one is more sanctified to-day than he was yesterday, and more sanctified before death than when first born again by the Spirit of God. In justification there is no increase or decrease whatever. It is a sentence pronounced and final. In sanctification there is increase continuous and progressive, till grace is lost in glory. Justification is an outer thing — Christ's righteousness imputed to us; sanctification is an inner thing — the Holy Spirit's work within us. Justification is a change of state; sanctification is a change of heart and nature. The

one lifts us from the prison into freedom ; the other enables us to enjoy, and grow, and be strong and healthy, in that freedom, and be fit for a nobler freedom — the privilege of Jerusalem which is above, which is free, the mother of us all.

Sanctification has two meanings, the one necessarily flowing from the other, in the New Testament. Its primary idea is that of separation. For instance, “ I am the Lord thy God, which have separated you from all people, that ye may be a holy people.” The separation first ; the holiness necessarily evolving from it. Again, we read in the New Testament, “ Separated unto the Gospel.” “ Chosen out of the world.” “ Be ye separate.” That is the rudimental commencement of sanctification — a separation from immersion in, approbation of, or identity with, that which is evil. But whilst this is its primary use, its frequent use, and our use of it, is as I have defined it, that of making the unholy holy ; producing, developing, out of the old man a new creature in Christ Jesus. Not resignation of duty is it, but the discharge of it ; not outer conventual robes, but inner holy or sanctified character ; not the maceration or mortification of the body, but of the lusts of the soul, and the implantation in their stead of all the affections of a new creature in Christ Jesus. It is the saint — which means the sanctified person — grafted on the man ; it is the heart vitalized or quickened by the Holy Spirit of God. When does sanctification begin ? His growth begins the instant that a babe is born ; his sanctification begins the instant that a new creature is born again. From the instant that the heart is regenerated, and we are made new creatures, that moment there is a progressive growth in triumph over evil, in sympathy with good, in likeness to Christ, the ultimate standard and model, and in fitness for the kingdom of heaven. There is progress in the long run, even if that progress should not be continuous. The babe grows to the full man ; the light

shineth more and more unto the perfect day; the grain of mustard-seed grows up into an overshadowing tree; so does he that is quickened of the Spirit of God. But some will say, "Is not this contradicted by the experience of many? nay, it may be by the experience of us all. Are we conscious of growth? We believe that we were born again; we believe that there was deposited in our hearts, if we be Christians, a living and an incorruptible seed. That we believe; we have evidence of it. But have we really made progress? Have we been characterized by real and substantial growth in likeness to Christ Jesus?" Some say, "I think not; I have not the same feelings of exhilaration, of excitement, of joy, of peace, I once had." I answer, That is no evidence. When a person is first brought from darkness unto light, the excitement is so intense as to be almost intolerable; but when he has lived a few weeks in the light, the enjoyment becomes like an every-day necessity. So when you first emerged from darkness unto light, you had feelings strong, irrepressible; but may it not be that though the effervescence be gone, there remains the pure wine of the kingdom behind? May it not be that though all the excitement of your first enlightenment is now laid, that passion then so fervent may have now become a principle more strong, more solemn, more enduring? But is this progress in sanctification always uniform? I do not believe it is always uniform. There are times of coldness, times of standing still, so great and marked as almost to indicate degeneracy. While one moves onward unfaltering, with unquivering eye, from strength to strength, another again seems to stand still. You have the perfect type of the growth of the Christian individual in the progress of the Israelites through the desert. Sometimes they moved forward with great speed and success; at other times stationary, at other times retrograding; but still the ultimate result was, in some of them at least, progress and success. A

plant grows slowly, sometimes it stands still, sometimes it actually droops and bows its head; but next day it is refreshed, it recovers, it grows up again, and rises rapidly to fruit and full maturity. So is it with the progress of a Christian. You must not expect the excitement of your first thoughts, serious and solemn, about religion; you must not expect a growth that can be measured by a rule, steady, invariable, so much per day. Be satisfied that you are advancing, that there is ultimate growth, if not regular growth, that can be measured or estimated by the outward eye.

A very important fact connected with this precious doctrine of sanctification, is this:—our progress in sanctification will very much determine the place we are to occupy in glory. The believer who was converted to the truth yesterday, and the believer who was converted twenty years ago, and has made steady progress since, equally cross the threshold of heaven, because the one has just as complete a title of admission — Christ's finished righteousness — as the other; but the one who has lived twenty years growing in grace has a fitness for a place in heaven, for a function, for privilege, for enjoyment, which the other confessedly, unless we deny plain common sense, has not. Both vessels will be full; but the one vessel has a larger capacity than the other. Both stars will shine in the lustre of the same bright sun; but one star differeth from another star in glory. Heaven is not a dead level, a dull monotony; each has the place for which the Holy Spirit has fitted and prepared him on earth; and according to the state of progress that he has made when death finds him, will be the place of dignity and privilege he will occupy in the realms of glory. If this be so, we may say in a very true and just sense, believers are now selecting upon earth the place they are to occupy in heaven. "Run the race; strive to enter in at the strait gate; seek and ye shall find" — the language of pressing perseverance;

and whilst we give God the glory of all, we never can shut our eyes to the fact that the use of means is ours; and that if we fail through indolence, or unbelief, or worldliness, or covetousness, in the use of those means that contribute to our progress, the sin and loss will unquestionably be ours. Therefore every believer is now really, practically, selecting the amount of happiness he is to enjoy in heaven. But when I say, the amount of happiness that he is to enjoy in heaven, let me remind you that the very essence of happiness is holiness; and that progress in holiness is really progress in happiness. The real truth is, that heaven is a happy place just because it is a holy place; and the degree of sanctification or holiness attained by a Christian upon earth, (I mean by holiness, conformity to the image of Christ, superiority to all the sins and temptations of the world, triumph over its difficulties, walking in the fear of God, setting him before us, filial affection towards him) — the degree that we attain of that on earth is not only our happiness here, but it is the earnest and the pre-libation of the amount of our happiness for ever. Holiness blossoms into happiness; happiness is its flower and its perfume. None can ever be truly happy but they that are truly sanctified or holy; and he has most of heaven in his heart, who has a heart most sanctified and subdued by the Holy Spirit of God.

Growth in sanctification is most desirable; because in proportion as you become holy you sympathize with God's mind, and feel the obligations and responsibilities of character devolving upon you. A person who is truly sanctified lives under the ceaseless pressure of a sense of duty to lead others to taste that happiness which he has, by drinking from that spring of holiness from which he has drunk before him. The way to be happy is to be holy; and the way to feel happy is to engage in active work for Christ's sake, and to God's glory.

Having seen what sanctification is in the heart of a believer, let us notice the instrument through which that sanctification is promoted. "Sanctify them through thy truth." — "Through thy truth." New birth is by the truth as its instrument. "Born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible; the word of God, that liveth and abideth for ever." "We are sanctified through the truth." The apostle Paul says, "Chosen of God through sanctification of the Spirit." He is the author, and belief of the truth is the instrument. And being therefore sanctified through the truth, we ask, how does the truth sanctify us — how does it do so as the instrument? First, it reveals to us motives and principles. Open your Bible, and you will find the truth stated in every page of it as an inducement or incentive to growth and progress in holiness. "I beseech you by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies living sacrifices." "Seeing that all these things are to be dissolved" — that is another truth — "what manner of persons ought ye to be!" "Seeing we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses" — well, what is the result of that? — "Let us run the race set before us with patience." Again, "As he who has called us is holy" — that is another truth; the inference is, "Be ye holy." Again, "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;" the truth of our redemption leading thus to sanctification. And therefore the truth sanctifies us by unveiling to us motives, hopes, principles, inducements to holiness. And if the truth be thus the means or the medium of our sanctification, then it is perfectly evident that the larger the mass of truth with which the human heart is brought into contact, the more the influence, by the blessing of God, it will exert upon that heart. We need to have our minds

continually brought into contact, not with man's opinions, but with the truth. "Thy word is truth." That word explained, elucidated, set in every light, brought home to the heart and to the conscience, and in proportion as the heart is brought into contact with the truth, in the same proportion will that heart be sanctified. And if the truth be the means of our sanctification, let us never forget that every doctrine that is in the Bible ought to be preached, and listened to, and believed. You must not say, "I do not like this truth, and I do not like that." If it be truth, it is one of the necessary means of your sanctification. Never say, "I do not like that preacher because he preaches election;" or, "I do not like that preacher because he dwells constantly upon man's responsibility." You must accept the whole truth. You are sanctified not through belief of election, or belief of the atonement, or belief of regeneration; but through belief of the whole truth, as that truth is declared and revealed in God's blessed word. And wherever you hear any truth on which is the stamp of God's approval, and the evidence of the Spirit's inspiration, there you have an element or a means of your sanctification. And if this be so, how important is it then that you should listen to the preaching of the truth. To sit under the ceaseless preaching of a falsehood is to sit under a ceaseless poisoning process; to sit under the ceaseless exhibition of the truth is to sit under a ceaselessly sanctifying, elevating, and purifying process. It is not, as some people think, an immaterial thing whether the sermon be God's truth or the reverse; and it is not true that you go away, if it is not God's truth, no worse, and if it was God's truth, much better. On the contrary, wherever you hear a sermon preached which has no truth in it, or which has the contrary of the truth in it, you are to that extent, except by special grace, a loser; and every time that you hear the truth preached, you are either sanctified through it, or you are made more responsible for having heard it. And when

we know how very deceptive the human heart is ; when we know how very prone it is to chime in with what is evil, I do not believe there is a more perilous or a more pernicious thing to a Christian in this world, even to a true Christian, than constantly hearing that which is not the Gospel. The action of the ceaseless exhibition of error is the gradual poisoning of the heart and the conscience. Far, far better, hear the humblest, poorest preacher telling you from the heart God's truth, than the most gifted and eloquent orator unfolding his own opinions, or tradition, or heresiés, or errors. Never forget it is, "Sanctify them," not through any sermon ; but it is, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Every truth that you hear preached faithfully and fully is either food to nourish you, or medicine to heal you, or wine to restore and refresh you. And therefore when you can hear the truth, hear it and be thankful for it ; and never forget your responsibility in the sight of God for what you hear. It is not the minister, but the ministry that you are to think of. It is not who says it, but what he says, that is vital and essential, and through which, if the truth, you are sanctified.

Whilst I have thus stated the process of sanctification and the means through which it is ordinarily achieved, let me not omit to state what is the most essential and vital thing, that God is the Author of it. These words of our Lord are part of his intercessory prayer. "Holy Father, sanctify them through thy truth." No ministry can do it, no sermon can do it ; the Holy Spirit alone is the Sanctifier, the Teacher, and the Comforter. And whilst therefore we appreciate the truth, and not partial truth, but the whole truth as the medium, we must never forget that God is the efficient Author of it all.

The Lord's Supper is so precious because it brings vividly before you the truth. Now here is the mistake into which people fall. They think that persons are sanctified,



or comforted, or strengthened, through the bread or through the wine, or through the rite they are celebrating. But that is a great mistake. You are sanctified through the truth that the ordinance brings before you. The Lord's Supper is designed and meant to bring truth vividly before you, not because there is any thing in the bread, or any thing in the wine, but because it is what Christ commanded you to do, and in doing which he has promised to give his blessing; it is because that bread and that wine vividly set before you the most vital, the most essential truth, which is the root of all truth, the very source and life of all truth, that you are not through it, but through what it seals and sets forth, sanctified, and cheered, and gladdened, and strengthened. There is no more sanctifying virtue in the bread and wine on the communion table *per se* than there is in the notes of the minister's sermon, or in the type by which the Bible is printed. The sanctifying power is through the intelligent understanding of it, through the truth that it vividly, pointedly, and clearly brings before you. For while God is the Author of the sanctification, it is not the sacraments, precious as they are, but the truths which the sacraments signify, that are the *media* and the means of your progress, sanctification, growth in happiness. And therefore it is a reasonable service. It is not an *opus operatum*; it is not, taste the bread, and you take the charm that sanctifies you; or sip the wine, and you taste an amulet that makes you another creature; it is by these bearing the impress of a Divine, even our Saviour's, institution; it is by these bearing the impress, and setting forth and reminding you of, and vividly preaching — for the language is, "Ye do show forth Christ's death;" ye do evangelize it, preach it — Christ's death, that through these precious truths you are sanctified, comforted, strengthened, in coming to that holy and blessed ordinance.

You can see, in the next place, why a Christian thirsts more and more to know the truth. His whole tendency

and desire is to be like God; and he knows that through the truth he is sanctified and made like him; and therefore he desires to know the truth in all its length and its breadth fully. And it is sanctification through the truth, let me add, that generates in the individual heart the deepest conviction of the inspiration and divine origin of this blessed book. "Sanctify them through thy truth." And what will be the result of that? This discovery, "Thy word is truth." The man who is a Christian is the man that most thoroughly believes the Bible to be divine; it is the inner effect of the book, or rather of the contents of the book, upon the individual heart, that by a reflex action makes that book appear to that individual more and more the Bible. And therefore, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The sanctification your fitness, the righteousness of Christ your title. Thus justified, thus sanctified, you come to that holy ordinance to commemorate the great and precious sacrifice by which you are forgiven; and to seek through the truth it seals and sets forth, progress in fitness for heaven, progress in that character which will qualify you for occupying no mean place in that city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

May He command his blessing upon these truths, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## CHAPTER XVII. 20, 21.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. — OPPOSITES. — FEATURES OF THE CHURCH. — VISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH. — THE APOSTASY. — A VISIBLE CHURCH. — BAPTISM. — THE COMMUNION. — ORDINATION. — THE CLERGY NOT THE CHURCH. — DIFFERENT COMMUNIONS. — UNITY OF THE CHURCH. — GREAT TRUTHS. — CHARMING VARIETY. — PERFECT UNITY IN THE AGE TO COME.

“NEITHER pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” Thus Jesus intercedes.

The distinction runs clear and sharp through the whole chapter, from its commencement to its close, between those who are called “the world,” and those who are called the Church, or the company and fellowship of all true believers. There is, in the language of another portion of Scripture, “a world that lieth in the wicked one;” the characteristics and constituent elements of which are, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, the love of this world. And there is its correlative, opposed to it, constantly in contact with it, yet in antagonism to it — the church of the living God; that world which has been a battle plain for ecclesiastical combatants, and yet that world which looked at and sought out for definition in the Word of God, appears to me so plain that he that reads may run while he studies and apprehends it.

Between these two then we are told almost in every por-

tion of this Gospel there will be war. There is peace apparently at present ; but is it, I wonder, that the world has become Christian, or that the Christian has become worldly? Or is it that the antagonism is not the vulgar one of bond, and imprisonment, and fire, and fagot ; but the more subtle, and yet not less trying one of reproach, and scorn, and shame, and ignominy, and contempt? It may be true that conflicts between the church and the world have been waged in drawing-rooms as stern and as trying as ever were waged amid the fagots and in the flames, when Cæsar swayed his iron sceptre, and the recusants of his idolatry were the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a battle which the world cannot see ; which has no smoke, no flame, and about which, and of which, no trumpet sounds ; but yet real. When a Christian can take the course that conscience dictates, and the nearest and the dearest to him brand him or her as a fanatic, a Methodist, a Calvinist, or some other strange name from the world's nomenclature ; there may be in bearing the scoff of those we love, in braving the contempt of those among whom we are, to a sensitive and a finely tuned heart, more real agony than encountering the wild beasts, and being burned in the flame. Let us not therefore suppose that the world has made a truce because we do not hear the din of the conflict. Wherever there is living religion in an individual heart, there is one placed in antagonism to the world ; and in some shape — what that shape may be we cannot prophesy — but in some shape the world and that individual will come into a collision that will on the one hand condemn the world, and be to that individual a proof that Christ has chosen him out of the world.

Now when Jesus speaks of these two classes, he gives us the peculiar and distinctive characteristics of the one class. He speaks of those that the Father has given him — those that are branches of the living vine — those that love Christ

— those that keep his commandments — those that are hated by the world — those that in the world have tribulation, but in him have peace. Now these are the members of the Church of Christ. And, common sense will tell you that if you love Christ, if you rest upon him for peace, if you obey his commandments, if you read his Word, if you love his people, Popes may excommunicate you, haughty Hildebrands may despise you; you may be unchurched by A., and anathematized by B.; but you are a Christian, and therefore a member of that church which shall survive all churches — the catholic, the redeemed, the sanctified, the adopted church of the Lord Jesus Christ. All outward systems are but approximations to this, as I shall show in the sequel of my remarks; they are not it. Do not forget that salvation is personal relation to a personal Christ; and if you belong to him you need not doubt one moment that you are a member of the true church, whether you be Churchman or Dissenter, Independent or Wesleyan; and if you do not belong to Him, you may argue about church and chapel, and establishment and dissent, till the millennium; you have no lot nor part in this matter. If all men would only think more, and feel more, and study more to ascertain each one's relationship to Christ, all, without suspecting it, without striving after it, would find themselves one happy brotherhood, one true catholic church in Christ Jesus.

But Jesus not only prays in this chapter for them that were his, and whom he specifies there; but for all that through their words shall believe on him even to the end of the world. This lonely sufferer, despised and rejected of men, yet looked along the vista of two thousand years, and he saw his church lasting to the world's close. Does not this show that if Jesus was not God, as we believe he was, he was at least a prophet to whom the end and the beginning were equally luminous? And what do you find? That Church has existed from the day when Christ uttered these

words onwards to the present moment. It has not always been strikingly visible. When the Romanist says, "If your church be not visible it ceases to be a church," he might as well say that when a man ceases to stand upon a hill, and is shut up in a closet, he ceases to be a man. Visibility is only an accident; it is not of the essence of the Church of Christ. And very often God's people may be so hidden that a prophet shall be constrained to say, "I only am left;" but it was his ignorance, for there were seven thousand unseen to him that had not bowed the knee to Baal. So in the middle ages the Church may have been, though the Church was not visibly resplendent. And if the Romish Church asks us, "Then where was the Church in the days of Gregory VII. or Hildebrand, or in the days of Gregory IX., or immediately before Leo X.?" I answer, "You are the last men upon earth that ought to ask such a question. You know where the true Church was; you had the keys of the prison doors that shut them up; you had the lights that ignited the fagots that consumed them." The caves of the Cottian Alps are strewed with their bones that have bleached for five hundred years; there is not a nook, or corner, or an acre in broad Europe that will not testify before God that the Church was here; and add the most awful testimony that the apostate Church was here also, proscribing and punishing it. That the Church of Christ, therefore, ever has been, is certain. But it was not what some of our very high churchmen — if such they may be called — allege, always visible. Those people that so call themselves, I remark in passing, are really the lowest churchmen upon earth. I hold myself to be a very high churchman; but my church is so high that there is none above it; and whatever is below it is not the true church. It is the company of Christ's people who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; that is the true high church; and all churches that contradict it are so low that

I cannot consent to join them. I say, the true Church in the middle ages was not that great company that worshipped in cathedrals; that had prince-bishops; that had all the pomp and splendor of this world's circumstance. That was the apostasy. The true Church was the woman that had rushed into the wilderness for shelter; she was the two or three that began in the days of Augustine, that carried on their beautiful but quiet succession in the days of the Waldenses in the West, and the Paulikians in the East; and that appeared as the "two witnesses" — the fewest essential to constitute a valid testimony — till the days of Martin Luther; and then they made their appearance in greater numbers. Whence is the word Protestant? From *protestor*, "I protest;" and *protestor* from *testis*, a witness. Now the "two witnesses" in the middle ages — the members of the Church — is literally translated, "the two Protestants," from Augustine onward to Martin Luther. And these "two witnesses" — the types of the true Church, like a beautiful silver thread run from the days of Paul onward to the days of Luther: and what the world pronounced in its folly to be the Church, God had registered in heaven as the man of sin, the great apostasy, the woman on seven hills, drunk with the blood of the saints of Jesus. Thus then we see that there has been a church from the beginning, and there will be to the end; and Jesus prays not only for them that believed in his name then, but for all that should believe in it to the very close of this dispensation.

Now, what is their characteristic? That they are Christ's body, that they are the purchase of his blood, that they are new creatures, that they are justified by Christ's righteousness, that they are sanctified by his Holy Spirit. All that bear these marks, however branded by men, are part and parcel of Christ's true Church. But you say (and you say very naturally), "This is the church that God sees; this is the church that basks in the eye of the Omniscient and the

Omnipresent. This we admit; but how do you define a visible church? Is there such a thing as a visible church?" I answer, Certainly; and just notice now how naturally and necessarily a company of Christians upon earth—that is, true believers—see that to manifest themselves to the world is a duty; and therefore constitute themselves into a church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church that I have portrayed is the pattern in the heavens—that is, the perfect Church. But is it not matter of great thankfulness that we have a perfect model set before us in the Bible?—in heaven, it is true, but still visible to us, and to which the nearer we approximate the more we approach to a perfect church. And that visible church upon earth—whether it be English, Scottish, or Irish—that is likeliest in its doctrine, nearest in its discipline, most assimilated in its practice to the company of true believers that are in glory, is the most scriptural church, and the truest branch of the church universal. And to show that all true Christians upon earth, finding that they are true believers, that they are united to Christ, will instantly feel it their duty to let the world know that it is so, we find a command laid upon all to be baptized, and a command addressed to the teachers and ministers of the Church to baptize. Now what is baptism? It is just the declaration before the world that the mark and the impress of Christ is upon us. The original idea of baptism was a profession before the world that Christ was ours, and that we are Christ's. But you will instantly say, "But if baptism be administered in infancy, how can this be true?" I answer, The time of its ministration is nothing; whether it be administered in infancy—that is, thirty, forty years ago—or whether it be administered yesterday, if the acceptance of it be understood; it is for all substantial and practical purposes the same. If I am not a Christian, if I am ashamed of Christianity, I denude myself of my baptism; I renounce it: but if I feel in my heart that I am a



Christian, then I stand by the obligations included in baptism; I take them all upon me; I profess to be a baptized man; and by being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, not to be regenerated, but because I was regenerated; and therefore if baptized, I profess to be a member of Christ, and a member of his church universal.

A second thing that will necessarily lead to this outward exhibition before the world, is our celebrating the communion. What is meant by that? That as baptism admits us into the outward and visible church, the communion table is a sign and symbol in the visible church of our resting upon Christ, our feeding upon him, our trusting on him, and our looking for his second advent. It is such a great pity that men do not take these simple views of the sacrament, that there are two churches, the outward and visible, and the inward and spiritual. Baptism admits us to the outward, where there are professors and those that are real, — tares and wheat; regeneration admits us to the inner church. The Lord's Supper is communion with the outer; union with Christ by the Holy Spirit is communion with the inner. Now the Holy Spirit gives us communion with the inner church, the ordinances of the visible church are the *media* of our communication and communion with the outer church; but both Baptism and the Lord's Supper necessitate by their very nature a profession visibly of principles that we have embraced in our inmost hearts. And then the result now of Baptism and the Lord's Supper will be, that we shall necessarily and naturally court association; and the more so we shall court it, because our Lord himself says that, "Wheresoever two or three of these true Christians are met in my name, there am I in the midst of them." That is the essence of a true church. A church may be developed into provincial or national; but the germ of it, the essence of it, is wherever two or three Christians are met in Christ's name; that is the true church — two or three, not two or

three thousand ; “ wheresoever ” — it matters not where ; hill-side, sea-shore, chapel, barn, church, cathedral — the architect builds the cathedral, the orator collects the crowd : it is Christ in the midst of it that makes the crowd a congregation, and the people a church. You have thus Baptism and the Lord’s Supper as outward signs, necessitating our congregating together in the name of Christ. If you ask, “ Why do you thus meet together ? ” it is to hear read Christ’s word, to pray in Christ’s name, to celebrate together Christ’s praise ; to set forth his most worthy praise, to read his holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary alike for soul and for body. And being so met, we constitute, by baptism, by communion, by our meeting together, a visible church ; that is, true believers are there, though mixed with them there ever has been, and there ever will be, an alloy of those that are not believers. Many come to hear the sermon who do not come to hear Christ ; many come to the house of God who do not seek the God of the house. And thus while it is true that no true Christian will absent himself from the outward worship — I mean deliberately and wilfully — many that are not true Christians, nevertheless will come and appear in the house of God.

Having seen how a congregation is formed, you will notice in the next place that all baptized, and communicants, and worshippers, are not equally gifted. One man has the gift of the purse, which is most valuable ; and he contributes to the maintenance and spread of the Gospel. Another man has the gift of great position, and he gives his influence. But other men have the gift of teaching, and are apt to teach ; and they exercise this gift. And as you have the week, six days, to toil for your bread, and want to be taught how to toil for that bread in God’s sight and serve him, there must necessarily be what there has always been — a class or combination of teachers, or ministers, or evangelists, or pas-

tors. If you ask, Is not that the people making the minister? I answer, No; not at all. No bishop in the Church of England can make a minister; no presbytery in the Church of Scotland can make a presbyter. The first thing to be ascertained is, Is this man moved by the Holy Spirit to be a minister? And if you find it to be so by an inquisition that is fallible but still dutiful, then the bishop can only say, "Within the jurisdiction that I have, and according to the forms I prescribe, you preach;" and the presbytery can say, "Within our province, and according to our forms, you preach." But he is made a minister within first by the Holy Ghost; then he gets the sanction, the seal, and the outward recognition and separation by (as it is well said in an Article of the Church of England — and the Articles of the Church of England are any thing but high-church, they are exceedingly low church in the common sense of the word; that is, exceedingly scriptural) "those that in the congregation have authority to do so;" a very simple and a very beautiful definition.

I do not think, and I cannot see that the people have the power to ordain or to lay hands upon the minister. I have not the least doubt that in the early Church the people took a great part in the appointment of their ministers; and in or out of our establishments the people still take a part in the selection of a minister; but the ordination of a minister, it does seem to me from the Bible, and it seems naturally from the thing itself, is to be by those who themselves have been previously ordained. The apostolical succession is in one sense the greatest absurdity; but in another sense it has been ever since the days of the apostle Paul; one minister has been ordained by those that were before him onward to the present moment. But to assert that there is a church or no church according to your success in tracing the links of the ordination of that church's ministers, is altogether a different question, and is simply to play into the hands of

the sceptic. I can see, therefore, an outward congregation established in Scripture; I can see an outward ministry, because the Apostle Paul, in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, unmistakably asserts it; but at the same time I believe the ministers are not a church. You hear very frequently people say, "My son is gone into the church." You ask, "What do you mean? Do you mean that he is baptized?" "Oh, no; I mean he has become a minister." But that is not going into the church; that is becoming a minister — quite a different thing. The ministry — whether it be Bishop or Presbytery — is not the Church. The Republic is not America, the Monarchy is not England. The people existed before the republic was in America, and the people existed before the monarchy was in England. It is the people that are the nation; the monarchy nobly and beautifully rules it. So in the Church of Christ, the ministers are not the Church, it is the people that are the Church. And I do not know a thought that ought to be more deeply riveted on the hearts of the present generation than this, that the clergy are not the Church; they are simply the officers. And what would Sir Charles Napier do upon the Baltic if he had not a crew? what would Admiral Dundas do on the Euxine if he had not gallant sailors on the deck? What would Lord Raglan have done at Alma if he had had no soldiers? The fact is, the clergy ought to be reminded that if they provoke a quarrel, who is greatest in the Church of Christ, they will find that they will fare the worst when it comes to an impartial issue. The truth is, the whole New Testament is for the people, and is addressed to the people. The Epistle to the Romans — to whom was that addressed? To Roman soldiers, and Roman sailors, and Roman shopkeepers, and Roman tradesmen, and Roman masters. And all the other Epistles have the same character: and two or three tiny Epistles — two to Timothy and one to Titus — are all the property in the New Testament that the clergy

have as clergy. You, the people, have the magnificent, the lion's share; we, the ministers, have a very much less portion indeed. It is better not to provoke the quarrel; it is better to concede the right where the right is so clear. The people are the Church, and the ministers are but the leaders, the guides, the officers, the servants of the Church for Christ's sake, to minister, not to your prejudices, but to your instruction, edification, and growth in grace.

The Church of Christ is not confined to any one sect or visible denomination that I know in the world at this moment. Is there any one sect or church that can say, "We comprehend all the people of God?" If it can say so, and if it can prove it, then that is the only true Church; but if you find hundreds — nay, not hundreds, but thousands of true Christians worshipping visibly upon other platforms, and extrinsic to the church that makes these pretensions, then you have a proof that that church does not comprehend all God's people. And, singular enough, the only church upon earth that claims a monopoly of salvation is the only church that has lost the Saviour and the way to heaven. And very singular it is, that the nearer any body of men approach to the Church of Rome the more arrogant they become, and the more they assume to be the lords paramount of the whole Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, when we look around us on the world, we can see true Christians in every economy, true worshippers of the Lamb in every section of the Church universal; and we learn, as we view the great scene, that the discipline of the Church is temporary, the doctrine of the Church is eternal; that to belong to Christ is the main thing, that the discipline you adopt is a very subordinate thing. And this teaches us, in the next place, it is not the government of the church that creates life, but only gives an egress to life. Episcopacy cannot make a living church; Presbytery cannot make a living church. On the contrary, the church may die under Bishops

just as it may die under Presbyters. There is no guarantee in any ecclesiastical polity that there shall be therefore perpetual life ; and there is nothing in any one polity that can quicken a dead church when once it is dead. The life of the church is communicated from Christ ; but the church unfolded in detail, and the government of the church, is not for giving life, but for enabling the church as a church more efficiently to affect the world, and extend and spread itself over all the earth, from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same. And if this be true, if our hearts be right, we should rejoice ever as a true Christian is brought out of the world, even should it be by an instrumentality we do not prefer. I may like very much that all men would join the communion I prefer, and become members of it ; but if that liking become so strong that I am grieved when a soul is converted by a brother in another communion, my Christianity cannot be of great depth. A larger view will show that wherever a true believer is made, wherever one is translated from the world into the kingdom of God's dear Son, he becomes a brother to me ; and a member of the universal church : and am I so narrow-minded, that because he cannot accept the forms and the polity that I prefer, I must therefore be grieved ? God forbid that it should be so ! All sections of the church are engaged in the same work, they are busy in the same magnificent enterprise ; and I shall rejoice, and will rejoice, wherever a soul is born again, whether that soul adopts an Episcopal, a Presbyterian, or an Independent communion. The great triumph is, that Satan has lost a victim, that God has gained a son ; and even if my communion suffer, and another communion is extended, thanks, and glory, and blessing, be to God for converted souls ; not envy, and jealousy, and rivalry on my part.

I have spoken heretofore of a visible body. Our Blessed Lord, in this passage, speaks of true unity : "That they all

may be one ; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." But first of all, in speaking of this unity, I will ask, what it is that constitutes the unity of this body, "that they all may be one?" I answer, Not in all possessing the same degree of intellectual acquaintance or metaphysical scholarship in the truths of the Gospel. In any congregation there is the greatest variety of knowledge. One man has the Bible — to use a common expression — at his finger-ends ; another man can scarcely quote a text without blundering ; but both, notwithstanding, may be true Christians, both united to Christ, and therefore brethren. It is not, in the second place, perfect agreement about every revealed truth if we agree in the great essential ones. One man believes that Christ died for all ; another believes that Christ died only for the elect ; both may nevertheless be true Christians. One man believes in Christ's personal advent previous to the millennium ; another man believes that the millennium will come first, and Christ come last ; both nevertheless may be true Christians. We cannot therefore assert that the unity of the church consists in our all agreeing about every shade of doctrine revealed in the Bible. And in the next place, this unity cannot consist in mere outward coalescence by ecclesiastical authority. Ecclesiastical authority can put down disagreement, but it cannot root out disagreement. It may conceal the discord, but it cannot quench it. And therefore no external force can make true unity in the church of Christ ; and certainly the old Pagan prescription of Rome will not do it — ignorance we shall find to be the mother of division, not the atmosphere of true unity. Of course, when everybody is blind, and no one sees the discord, there will be no dispute ; but to make it a condition of unity, that you shall put your eyes out, is, to say the least of it, a very severe one. Besides, the Book that speaks of Christians as the children of light, speaks of a body of persons who will not, for the sake of an imaginary unity, give up

the light that they have. In one word, this unity does not proceed from without at all. Man can create uniformity; God alone can inspire unity. Uniformity is outward resemblance, which the scissors or the pencil can create; but unity is inward concord, which the Holy Ghost alone can give. An Episcopalian and an Independent may be perfectly united, and yet outwardly differ. Two Episcopalians may outwardly be like each other as if the one was the reflection of the other, and yet there may be no unity at all. It is not external likeness, but internal harmony and concord. Then the basis of such unity as Christ speaks of here must be the acceptance of certain great truths that are constantly referred to throughout the Bible. It is impossible to read the Bible without seeing that there are certain truths that stand up like the Alps themselves, jutting out from the ordinary level, rising above every thing beside, prominent, distinct, unmistakable. The Godhead of the Father, the Godhead of the Son, the Godhead of the Holy Ghost: and yet one God: justification by Christ's righteousness through faith: sanctification by the Holy Ghost: these are truths that people can scarcely overlook; that no impartial reader, I think, can misapprehend. And those that have been Unitarians, have been found, when they come to look more closely, and in a more reverential light, unable to continue so. I made the remark somewhere a short time back, that Dr. Channing died renouncing his Socinianism. A Unitarian minister at Bristol wrote a letter to the papers denying that there was any truth in it. I had taken the statement from an American newspaper; but this made me search. I went into a shop and got the "Life of Channing, written by his nephew." Channing was the most beautiful mind, the most accomplished writer, that I know; and such a writer, so brilliant, so beautiful, so amiable, so overflowing with love, I have often earnestly desired might die loving and resting on Christ as the Son of God. Well, to my de-



light, when I searched his biography I found these words spoken by him on his death-bed, — “The longer that I live the less trust I feel in Unitarianism. I have no sympathy with Unitarianism whatever. I have nothing in common with Priestley and with Bentham.” These were the sentiments of one whose great mind was sick of the dry and drivelling Unitarianism of the men that he refers to; and felt what he found, that there was only rest in a sacrifice that God in our nature made for our sins.

These great truths then are so clear, plain, striking, that one can scarcely mistake them. There must be, therefore, to have perfect peace, the acceptance of these truths; and not only the acceptance of these truths, but of every true believer as a member of the same body. I think it is impossible, at least it is barely possible, not to see that every Christian — and it would be a very interesting study — from the days of Adam downward to the present hour, had certain grand generic marks, and features, and characteristics, that indicate one family and one brotherhood. Enoch walked with God, against the current of the world. That is a Christian’s walk still. Take Abraham — listen to his intercession for Sodom; notice his going forth he knew not whither, to a land that God should show him. Notice his giving up, and readiness to sacrifice his son, his only son Isaac, at God’s bidding. Do you not see in these moral traits the great generic traits of every true Christian? Take Moses — when he chose rather to suffer with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. That man must have been a Christian; for his is a Christian feature. Mark the fearless devotedness of Knox, the intrepidity of Luther, the boldness of Cranmer, the gentleness of Melancthon, the faithfulness of Ridley. Or come down to excellent ministers and Christians in later days. Take Bunyan, Baxter, or Wesley; and you will see in all these men grand generic features that they had in common,

developed in different circumstances, in spite of different restraints; which demonstrate to the impartial spectator that they belong to one great family, the company of Christ, and were one in Christ, and brethren one therefore with another.

But this unity that I have spoken of is not to be realized in all its perfection in this present dispensation. The apostle himself says, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God;" and, He gave pastors, teachers, and evangelists for this; showing that there will not be perfect unity whilst pastors, evangelists, and teachers are in the world. And let us not forget, that the day of knowledge, as far as it is inspired, is gone; the day of faith, as far as it was miraculous, is also gone; but the day of love continues with brightening beams, shining more and more unto the perfect day. If the world can say, what we are responsible for its not saying, "Behold, how these Christians love one another," depend upon it the world will see that there is divinity in Christ's mission; and it will be convinced, in the language of this chapter, that Christ hath sent us. The longer I live the less I am disposed to sympathize with ecclesiastical quarrels; as long as I can preach the Gospel, and live the Gospel in a church to which I have been accustomed, so long it would be, with my feelings, schism to depart from it. There is such a deplorable tendency in men who get a little uneasy to try and set up new machinery; while it would be more dutiful, though it would require more struggle, to remain, and try and improve and inspire the old. It is not new machines that we want, but new inspiration in the old. The worst of churches with good men to work it will be a blessing; the best of churches with bad men in it will only be a curse. Let us look upon all our churches and denominations as many different chapels in the same grand cathedral, under the same great roof, in which each worships God in his own tongue wherein he

was born: but in the worship of each Christ is the key-note, the all and in all.

May God bless what I have said to our increase in grace and purity; and to his name be praise and glory! Amen.

NOTE. — [Ver. 2.] But in this wide gift there is a more special gift, — *ο δέδωκας αὐτοῦ* in the stricter sense, — the chosen, they who believe on him. And to them, and them only, he imparts the further and ineffable gift consequent on union with him their God in the Spirit, namely, eternal life (compare v. 26, 27; also vi. 37).

[5.] See a similar definition of a term just used in ch. iii. 19, *ἐστὶν* “is;” not, “is the way to.” The knowledge spoken of is no mere head or heart knowledge, — the mere information of the mind, or excitation of the feelings, — but the living reality of knowledge and personal realization; that oneness in will with God, and partaking of his nature, which is itself life eternal; the knowledge, love, enjoyment of him, who is infinite, being themselves infinite. — *Alford*.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

JUDAS. — THE QUESTION OF JESUS. — THE EFFECT OF THE PRESENCE OF CHRIST. — PETER'S RASHNESS. — ANGER. — CAIAPHAS. — PETER'S DENIAL. — PILATE. — THE MOB. — TRUTH.

WHAT an interesting and impressive portrait is here sketched by the pen of the sacred evangelist; a portrait so just in all its details, so natural in its very first impression upon all that look at it, that it is impossible to conclude that it is not a sketch from a living original present at the time it was drawn up, and who is there not sitting, but standing a criminal at the bar, that the evangelist might thus give the portrait!

It appears in the commencement of the chapter, that Judas, one of the twelve, chosen to be an apostle, intrusted with the little all of that holy but helpless group, betrayed the sacred responsibilities of his office, giving full swing to that avarice which began slightly, grew as it was encouraged, and ultimately ended in the betrayal — the guilty, the criminal, the unforgiving betrayal — of the Son of God into the hands of the chief priests and the Pharisees. "He having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees," came to him, and pointed him out. Then Jesus went forth, and with all the magnanimity of conscious innocence, courting investigation, defying criminality, said, "Whom seek ye?" They answered him at once, "Jesus of Nazareth." Then Jesus instantly replied, "I am he;" that is, I am the person you seek. When the crowd came to Jesus as he approached Jerusalem on a former oc-

casion, and tried to enthrone him as a king, it is said he left them and retired into the shadow; but when the crowd came to crucify him as a criminal he boldly confronted them, and was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." They asked him again, "Who art thou?" and he answered again, "I am he;" and when he answered the second time, "I am he," they went backwards and fell to the ground. I do not believe that this was a miracle spontaneously wrought by Jesus; but that the awful majesty of that lonely man, the mighty force of truth and innocence, and life and love, so struck the infuriated crowd, that the very weapons dropped from their hands, and they fell prostrate on the ground. We all know that there is a nobler force than weapons and swords and artillery represent — the force of moral excellence, the might of conscious innocence, the dignity of true and celestial virtue. And that spectacle of One who spake as never man spake, did as never man did, and lived as never man lived, and made an impression upon the crowd that struck dumb, though it could not sanctify, and arrested, though it could not prevent.

Simon Peter — always the same character throughout — drew a sword, and smote the high-priest's servant, and cut off his ear. You must have noticed in the course of our readings on these most precious Gospels, how completely the character of each individual is kept up from the first to the last; and kept up in such a way as no novelist could have kept it up, for evidently the incidental expressions, which were not designed to show the identity of the character, drop out here and there, which show that Peter was a real person; the rash, the impetuous, the headstrong; always first to strike, and alas! one of the first to retreat and deny his Master; not, mark you, from deliberate wickedness — for that was not Peter's character — but just from

turbulent and impetuous passions, unrestrained in childhood, and ungovernable probably in manhood. We contrast with Peter the amiable, the meek, the mild John, and we think when we see them both that the one was all Christianity, and the other none. But it may be that Peter had a more terrible inner work than John had. John had constitutionally an amiable, and gentle, and peaceful spirit; nature gave him that; it was sanctified and ennobled by grace, it is true: Peter had an intractable, a fierce, and impetuous temperament; and he had much to sacrifice by grace; and after Pentecost he was only able by the aid of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and subdue it. But yet the impetuous passion is not always a sign of the worst character. Judas never lost his temper from the beginning to the end; he was a deep, crafty, designing sinner; and never once did he lose his temper, never once said a rash word, or one that did not go to the end he had in view. Peter, on the other hand, was all impetuosity, temper, rashness; but he was constitutionally a noble character, passionate as he was: Judas was constitutionally an abandoned character, cautious, and careful, and prudent, if I may use that word, as he was. We must not therefore think that a person with a hot temper is not a Christian; nor must we think — as I have stated to you, I think, in the course of my expositions of these Gospels before — that anger is a sin. Adam in Paradise may have been angry; and Eve may have seen something in the garden not to her taste that made her angry. We were made to be angry; the regulation of it is the great thing. “Be ye angry, but sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” As long as Eve retained her innocence and Adam his allegiance to God, their anger was only a transient spark struck out, and no sooner kindled than it was quenched; but when Adam and Eve lost their innocence and were cast out from God, I have not the least doubt that their quarrels lasted after sunset, and the sun

went down upon their wrath. But we must not form a severe opinion of Peter because Peter was passionate; but feel as a counterbalance how much Peter had to contend with. However, here Peter's passion went further than words; and thus there was great peril. He drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high-priest. This indicated a fine feeling; it was his deep love to his Master, it was his hatred of the conduct of those that assailed him. But then he ought to have remembered, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty." I wish only that the long list of men that profess to have Peter's succession had inherited better traits in their succession than drawing the sword and smiting those that differ with them. Our blessed Lord instantly healed the wound that Peter had made; and told Peter, "Put up thy sword into the sheath." And then, evidently in reference to his agony in Gethsemane, not recorded in this Gospel, he says, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Just notice the conduct of Jesus all throughout; how calm, how self-possessed, how little ruffled by any thing that occurred! Now just suppose that all these writers — Matthew, a vulgar tax-gatherer; Luke, a physician; John, a rude, rough fisherman; and Mark, an ordinary personage, some think more learned — suppose these four persons had written these Gospels, is it possible to conceive that they could have sketched a character so faultless at all points, — so perfect, seen at every angle, — so complete, looked at in every position, in every place, under every trial, in all circumstances, — so spotless? — is it possible that in an age when Plato could not sketch Socrates, when Xenophon could not give a true picture of the perfect man that would bear inspection, that these rude men, in a province of the empire — not Athenian, not Corinthian, not Roman — but in a distant province of the empire, never having any æsthetic exhibitions to elevate them, no crystal palaces, no fine statues, no beautiful paintings,

nothing to cultivate their taste, — is it possible to conceive they could have sketched such a character? I say, the infidel who disbelieves the inspiration of the New Testament is guilty of a credulity that no language of mine can express; and he that believes it to be the inspiration of God is guilty of a common sense that falls in with Christianity itself.

After this, we read that Peter and John both followed. It says in the 15th verse, “Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high-priest.” Whenever John alludes to himself you will find him omitting his own name; he is always “the disciple whom Jesus loved;” or “that other disciple;” the utter absence of egoism or egotism, the perfect sinking into the shadow, that nothing might darken the glory of the blessed Master. “But Peter stood at the door without.” There was something here to be said of John; and therefore John omits his name, lest it should be thought he wanted to praise himself. It says, “That disciple was known unto the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest;” and that was his safety: his very boldness was his safety. But Peter, who thought it was too dangerous or too daring to go into the very palace of the high-priest, stood at the door without, listening at the door what might occur, balancing the chances of success, of escape, or of the reverse. And what was the consequence? That he that did his duty, and went into the forefront of the battle, escaped unscathed; and the coward that lurked behind had the awful recollection that he denied his blessed Master. Where duty bids us go there safety is complete, and expediency prompted by our own passions is not always the truest or the highest safety. And accordingly, when Peter is asked, not by a judge upon the bench that might awe him, not by soldiers with weapons in their hands; but by the maid that kept the door, “Art thou one of them?” Peter



answered, "I am not" — a direct and deliberate lie. I do not believe that Peter designed to deny his Master; but just as his passions so overcame him that he smote off the servant's ear, so his fears so overcame him now that he denies the blessed Master himself.

Then "the high-priest asked Jesus of his disciples" — that is, who they were — "and of his doctrine;" not doctrine in the sense of tenet, as we often employ it; but doctrine in the sense of teaching — what his teaching was. Then Jesus said, "I spoke openly to the world." This was not said as a retort; but simply, I spoke openly, that is, I have not an esoteric and an exoteric teaching like the Greek philosophers. All that I speak is for anybody; there is not one lesson for the clergy, and another for the laity — one for the priest, and another for the people; but one for all. "Why askest thou me?" When he had thus spoken, we read that "one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so?" There was nothing in the reply of Jesus discourteous; there was nothing but a plain, simple, clear statement of doctrines of vast importance. Well then, how did Jesus meet this? He said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" Now I think there is in this reply of Jesus a perfect example of a commentary on a verse sometimes misapprehended; namely, Matthew v. 39 — "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Now that must be explained in the light of the example of Him who uttered it; and you find here that when Jesus was smitten, he remonstrated; he asked for a reason; and he showed there was none, and that therefore the smiting of him was not only unjust, but unreasonable and unfair. And therefore we are not to be absolutely passive and submit to injury when there is an opportunity of defending ourselves; but on the con-

trary, we are to employ every lawful means of vindicating character assailed, of repelling an assault that is unprovoked, and shielding us and ours from them that would take away the blessings and privileges of both.

We read next, that after Peter had three times denied his Master, the cock crew according to the prophecy, a signal to him of his sin. The sequel of what occurred in the history of Peter is not given in this Gospel.

After this, they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment; and Pilate therefore asked, "What accusation bring ye against this man?" Now they answered Pilate with real impertinence — the very thing they had imputed to Jesus — "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Now they ought to have answered, they had a reason for it. Then Pilate said, "Take ye him, and judge him." Let us watch the whole history of Pilate: it is, I think, the most pitiful specimen of royal rule, as some think — for he was a governor and ruler of the province — contained in any narrative. He believed from first to last that Jesus was an innocent being. You remember his washing his hands; his wife telling him that she had had a dream, and not to dare to touch that just man. You find him first stating, "I find no fault in him;" you find him next asking the Jews to take the responsibility of dealing with him; afterward proposing to crucify another person, and to let Jesus go; but all in vain. Now, if he had been a ruler worthy of the name, he would have done his duty, and let the innocent go at all hazards. But he was one of those rulers who have no fixed principles; men that first feel the pulse of their superiors, then they feel the pulse of the crowd. They first listen to the opinion of some great man, then to the opinions of some great crowd; and they vacillate between right and left, between conscience and passion, between duty and expediency; and the issue of it is ruin to themselves, and disaster to their country. This was

exactly the character of Pilate. He listened first to the mob, and said, "Well, I must not despise the people; they can upset me. If I become unpopular, then Cæsar at Rome will depose me; I must at all hazards gratify the crowd." Then he said on the other hand, "If I do not let this man go, my conscience will torment me through life; for I am satisfied he is an innocent man." I have no doubt the bitterness that poor man, Pilate, endured was most awful. He had the deepest conviction that Jesus was innocent; he had the most thorough fear of the crowd; and alas, alas! he gave way to convenience; his conscience was put in the background; and the tumultuous plaudits of a restless and vacillating mob became the laws and government of his life. The issue of it was disastrous to himself, and no doubt torture to his feelings in after-life. Of this we have no record.

"Then Pilate said to Jesus, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" Do you wish to charge me with being so; do you propose the question of yourself, or are you acting in your official character, and putting the question to me in order to eriminate me? "Pilate answered, Am I a Jew?" I know nothing of your religious questions or your ecclesiastical disputes. These are matters for you. I am a ruler, and rule without religion, and do not wish to be teased in my government with religious questions. Your own nation has delivered you unto me; what hast thou done?" Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; "it is not a kingdom fenced by bayonets; it is not a throne surrounded by soldiers; it is not like Roman Cæsar's; I have not a crown like his; "My kingdom is not of this world;" if it were so, then by physical force I should defend myself, and by physical force I should prevail. "But now my kingdom is not from hence." His kingdom will come down from above, the new Jerusalem cometh down from heaven like a bride adorned for the bridegroom. Then

Pilate said, "Art thou then a king?" — that is, Is there any sense in which you are so? Jesus said, "I am;" the phrase, "Thou sayest that I am a king," is equivalent to and denotes, "I am just what thou sayest." "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." He is a king now in a sense that is not seen; ruling in individual hearts; ruling in Providence; restraining, governing, and directing. But a day comes when his own company will be complete, when the hidden thing shall be made the manifest thing; and he shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

When Pilate heard the mention of truth, he asked the question, "What is truth?" Now what a pity he did not wait for an answer! But how many persons are guilty of a plagiarism from Pontius Pilate; they ask, "What is truth?" but do not search to find it, or wait for a reply that will satisfy their curiosity. "But ye have a custom," Pilate says to the people, "That I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore" — his own feeling overcoming him — "that I release unto you the king of the Jews?" Now mark what an awful spectacle; the whole crowd shouted, "Not this man," but release in his stead a thief and a robber.

In St. Giles' Old Cathedral in Edinburgh, Dr. Blair was the morning preacher — one of those high and dry, or, as we call them in Scotland, "moderate" but elegant preachers, who do not preach the Gospel, and not very much of the Law. But the afternoon preacher was Mr. Walker, whose sermons still show that he was a faithful and evangelical minister. Dr. Blair preached one morning; and gave one of those exquisitely classic and beautiful gems — a picture of the beauty, the majesty, and grandeur of truth; and he said, "So grand and impressive is truth, that if truth were to come down to our world, the whole world struck by its charms would instantly give truth the adoration and worship that was due."

Mr. Walker preached in the afternoon : and he said, “ My reverend colleague has said ” — though it was not his habit to contradict — “ that if truth were to appear upon earth all men would give truth worship.” He said, My dear parishoners, truth appeared in our world ; the experiment does not remain to be made. But instead of all the world giving worship to truth, it shouted with one voice, ‘ Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a thief and a robber.’ ”

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NOTE. — [1.] Τῶν Κέδρων “ of the cedars,” has apparently been a mistaken rendering of the Hebrew name of the brook, כִּדְרוֹן; to whom due is not plain. We may, however, be quite sure that it would not be owing to John himself, but to some Greek transcriber unacquainted with Palestine. Josephus calls it *χείην κεδρώνος* or *φάραγξ κεδρώνος*, Antt. viii. 15 ; ix. 7. 3. (See 2 Sam. xv. 23 ; 2 Kings xiii. 6.) The ravine, at the bottom of which flows the Kedron, is to the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives.

[*κηπος.*] Jücker suggests that the owner of this garden may have been friendly to (or a disciple of?) Jesus. It was called Gethsemane (Matt. ; Mark). Traditions as to its site are, as usual, various. A square plot of ground in the depth of the ravine is now pointed out, and seems to have been fixed on at the time when the Empress Helena visited Jerusalem, A. D. 326. Eusebius says Gethsemane was by the Mount of Olives, Jerome, at the foot of the mount. The language of Luke xxi. 37, leads to a belief that it was higher up the Mount. Robinson, i. 346. — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER XIX.

DEATH OF JESUS. — PILATE. — CROWN OF THORNS. — PILATE'S APPEAL. — INCONSISTENCY OF JEWS. — THE CROSS. — PILATE'S RENewed INQUIRY. — INSCRIPTION ON THE CROSS. — PROPHECY. — RELICS. — "IT IS FINISHED." — PROOF OF CHRIST'S DEATH. — SEPULCHRE.

AN infidel has said that "if Socrates died like a hero, Jesus died like a God." We need no more expressive proof or comment upon this sentiment than the sublime, the impressive, the awful chapter we have now read. We saw, in the course of the exposition of the previous chapter, that Pilate seemed to have a latent conviction that Jesus was what he professed to be; that he was betrayed by the bitterness of his foes; and must be condemned not in justice for his alleged crimes, but in compliance with the demand of a bigoted and a furious populace. We accordingly find in the previous chapter that Pilate made every effort to let Jesus go, anxious to have an excuse for his acquittal; shrinking from what he felt would be a crime, but not having courage to do what his conscience told him was his duty. In this chapter he takes Jesus and scourges him. If he was guilty, why not give him up to be condemned; if he was innocent, why scourge him? When men cease to obey pure duty, they fall into the most contradictory and inconsistent courses.

The soldiers then plaited a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and a purple robe upon him; and they said in mockery and contempt, "Hail, King of the Jews!" that is, "Thou that pretendest to be the King of the Jews." And then

Pilate brought him forth, and said, "I find no fault in him." "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!" Is this the man you are afraid of? Is this the being you fear will sway the sceptre, and mount the throne, and claim jurisdiction over all your land? How deeply must you be mistaken. Behold him! He looks more like a servant than a prince; like a man of sorrows rather than the heir of majesty. Ought I not, may I not let him go, as one too poor, and feeble, and friendless to injure you? Behold him! and judge for yourselves, if the punishment of such a one be at all necessary for the safety of yourselves, or the vindication of your land.

Pilate again intimated how anxious he was to let him go; and how little desire he felt for his crucifixion or death.

When the chief priests saw Jesus, they shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him." Nothing can be more shocking; because they asked the Roman to inflict a Roman punishment, which the Jews could not inflict; and their asking the Roman to do so was their recognizing Roman supremacy. In other words, they gave up their ardent zeal for the independence of Palestine, which they felt exceedingly grieved and vexed at being regarded as a province, and recognized the supremacy of Cæsar, in order to gratify their malignant enmity to the Son of God, the Saviour of Sinners. Pilate said to them, with consummate sarcasm, that must have penetrated their hearts, and felt to them most bitter, "Take ye him, and crucify him." But they had no power to crucify him; crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment at all; and they had no power whatever to crucify him. Pilate adds, "I find no fault in him."

From this fact, that Jesus was crucified, the cross in a superstitious Church has been invested with a glory and a sacredness that one can scarcely see to belong to it. The excellence of Jesus' sacrifice was not in the mode of his

death, but in the fact of his death: and it was the most incidental of things that it was a cross, and not stoning, or some other mode of punishment. There is no glory or excellence in the mode of his death; it was not even the manner of a sacred or a Jewish death, but a heathen or a Roman one; and to venerate a cross, as if there were a glory in it, is the most absurd and outrageous abuse of the mode of death of our Blessed Lord. And, very consistently, those that venerate the cross search for the nails; next for the clothes in which he was wrapped; next for the coat that he wore; next for the sponge and the reed; and they profess to have all, and venerate all. So dangerous is it to admit a principle which, carried out, will land in the most extravagant and monstrous results of fraud, superstition, and folly.

We then read that they argued with Pilate a little longer, and urged that Jesus made himself the Son of God. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid." Why afraid? Not afraid that he would be a king, and depose him, but evidently on account of the awful majesty of the alleged criminal at his bar. The whole history of Pilate's intercourse with Jesus indicates in Pilate's mind a deep and awful impression that he was dealing not with the son of Mary, but with the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. One can see the proofs of that feeling, however latent, at every instance; and not a little in the desire of Pilate to wash his hands of the guilt that he felt would cleave to him if he gave up Christ to be crucified. Then Pilate said to him, "Whence art thou?" not, From what part of Palestine comest thou? but, Art thou of Divine origin? art thou really the Son of God? Do tell me if thou be the brightness of the Father's glory. "Whence art thou?" "But Jesus gave him no answer." Why so? Because repeatedly he had told him in the previous chapter that he was the Son of God; and the repeating of the question to receive the same answer, if Pilate did not wish to be taught, was truly waste



of words, and waste of time, and only the gratification of an itching curiosity, not a reply to an anxious and inquiring heart. "Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

This text has two interpretations. The first is, Thou couldest have no power except it were given thee from Cæsar thy superior. or from the Sanhedrim, who directed; therefore, the party that gave me up to thee hath the greater sin. But the far more impressive textual interpretation is, Thou couldest have no power at all against me except you were invested with the office which God has made responsible, and clothed with legitimate authority and power; and therefore the Sanhedrim that gave me up to thee — who art not my judge, but simply the executor of the sentence of the judge — has the greater guilt; for they have done it knowing my majesty, my greatness, my glory; thou art the mere unhappy, and it may be unconscious instrument of executing a sentence, the justice or injustice of which thou art not able to expiscapate and adequately to determine. Then Pilate sought again to release him; the same feeling continued in Pilate's mind; but the Jews, who hated Cæsar, yet for the occasion argued, "Thou art not Cæsar's friend." Pilate again brought him forth, and sat in the judgment-seat; and again he said to them, "Behold your king!" Why should you be alarmed at him? There is no risk of his taking away your country, or destroying your province, or superseding Cæsar. Look at him! How can you anticipate such results from so inadequate a cause? But they cried out, evidently deaf to argument, "Away with him; away with him; crucify him!" Pilate again remonstrates; we see throughout how anxious he is to let him go. "Shall

I crucify your king?" And then the chief priests said — as if to show the fulfilment of the prophecy, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until the Shiloh come;" and to prove that the sceptre had departed, and from their own lips too, they gave unanimous expression to the sentiment — "We have no king but Cæsar." Judea is a province, Rome is the capital, and Cæsar is our king. He then delivered up Jesus to them to be crucified, and they took him and led him away. We then read that he bore his cross — a heavy cross beam — to a place called Golgotha; a conical mount, supposed still to be traceable near Jerusalem; and called "the place of a skull," from its similarity to the crown of the human head. There they crucified him, with a thief upon the one side, and another thief upon the other. And they wrote a title, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." They wrote it in Latin, which was the official tongue; in Greek, which was the language of the higher classes; and in Hebrew, or Syriac, which was the language of the great mass of the people of Israel; and thus the name, the office, the dignity, the true title of Jesus was legible in every tongue in Palestine; an earnest and a type of that day when his name shall be exalted above every name, and all tongues shall praise him, and all tribes shall bless him, and be blessed in him.

We then read that when they crucified him, they parted his garments into four parts, and his coat they cast lots for. It was a sort of priestly or sacerdotal robe, not worn by him in order to signify a priestly office, but the ordinary robe worn in that day. If you wish to see the sort of robe, the stones that have been dug from Nineveh will show some of the robes worn by the officiating priests, or by the eagle-headed figures taken from ancient Egyptian and Nineveh remains. It was a loose robe that hung down from the neck, fastened with a clasp or a buckle, and descending to the

ankles — this robe they did not wish to sever, and therefore they cast lots for it. Now how strange that so minute an incident as this should be the subject of a prophecy; and what a proof in the fulfilment of that minute prophecy, that other prophecy equally minute will be exactly fulfilled. This robe has been worshipped in the Church of Rome, I mean regarded with the veneration usually given to relics in that communion. We have all read that at Trèves it was exposed for the veneration of the faithful. But there is no evidence that it was the real robe; on the contrary, there is the strongest evidence that it was not; for the dye of it is recent.

The peculiar dye of the coat at Trèves was unknown in the days of our Blessed Lord, as chemists have shown; but let us see here how little sanction there is for such a thing. If this coat had been meant to have been preserved as a relic, you would have had the history of it; that it was handed over to such a family, and they devoutly kept it, and transmitted it to such another family, and they devoutly venerated it, and then it came into the possession of such another family, and was there cherished, and then handed down to the next, and so on. But it is stated, in the plainest manner, "They cast lots for it," and I have no doubt the soldier to whom it fell went to the nearest wine-shop, sold it or pledged it for a little wine, and it was worn, and ultimately torn to pieces, after it was worn out; a striking proof that it is not the robes, the nails, the cross, the varied accompaniments of that death, that are of any efficacy or value to us; but the precious fact, that the victim died bearing our sins, and rose again for our justification.

After this, when Jesus said, "I thirst," they gave him the usual drink of Roman soldiers, a sort of light and sour wine, called here vinegar. And when he had tasted it, he exclaimed, "It is finished." What a magnificent sentiment!

“All ancient types are now exhausted ; all ancient prophecies are now fulfilled ; all the sins of the world laid upon me are now expiated ; there is now a perfect sacrifice ; there is now glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill to men. You have not to do, to suffer, or to pay, in order to be blessed ; through my death it is finished. There is no more suffering required, no more payment demanded. I have borne all that you deserved as sinners ; I have paid all that you owed as creatures ; by me and through me, received by faith, the worst, the guiltiest and the vilest may have access to the Father for mercy and for forgiveness.” “And he bowed his head, and,” it is said in our version, “gave up the ghost,” literally, dismissed his spirit. Not died by constraint, but voluntarily gave up his spirit. It was in his own hands ; he had power to lay it down, and power to take it up.

We then read that the usual treatment of the crucified was inflicted on the thieves. But when they came to Jesus, they did not break his legs ; and that was the unconscious fulfilment of a prophecy, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” But they pierced his side, and blood and water came forth. Medical men will tell you, that this is the strongest proof that death had taken place. This seems a very unnecessary incident, and yet it is a very precious one. What is called the *pericardium*, that surrounds the heart, must have been penetrated ; and water and blood coming out must prove, as medical men assert, that death had taken place ; and if it had not taken place, the wound was so serious that it must have been fatal. But you ask, why is it so important to prove this ? Because, if he had not really died, there would have been no proof of a real resurrection, but only the infidel’s presumption of a pretended one. The very fact, therefore, that his death is proved to have so positively taken place, is, among other things, necessary to prepare us for the proofs that his resurrection also took place on the third day.

Joseph of Arimathea, a rich and influential Christian, but, like many rich men in every age, afraid, out of shame, to be the adherent of the Crucified, nevertheless came forward when his presence was most required, and took charge of the body of Jesus ; got the spices in which, according to the custom of the Jews, it was to be wrapped to prevent decay, and laid it in a sepulchre — a new sepulchre, wherein never man was laid. Why record that incident? Because if other man had been laid there, there would have been no clear proof that it was Jesus that rose from the dead. The very fact that it was a new sepulchre, wherein man had never before been laid, made it more easy to identify the risen one as the very being who was laid in it. And in the next place, it shows how very poor Jesus was, how little sympathy there was with him, when this sepulchre was selected, not because it was the best, but because it was “nigh at hand.”

Here, then, is a death which is our life, a sacrifice which is our salvation ; a record is in this chapter, worth all that Plato ever taught, or Homer ever sung, or philosopher ever dreamed, or scholar ever prepared. Thanks be to God for that cross and passion ! may he give us faith to rest upon it ; may he make us thankful for it ; may he help us with all the heart to praise him who redeemed us at so great expenditure, and has made us sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

## CHAPTER XIX.

(*Second Part.*)

PILATE'S VACILLATION. — INNOCENCE SUFFERS. — PILATE'S WIFE.  
— MORAL BORDERERS. — JESUS' DEATH. — ITS NATURE. — JOSEPH  
OF ARIMATHEA. — NICODEMUS.

ONE of the most humiliating spectacles presented in the Bible is that of Pilate; one who had all the dignity, the duty, and the responsibility of royalty, but had neither the candor nor the courage to carry it out in the most trying circumstances. One can see at every point of his character that his inner conviction was, that Jesus was an innocent man; nay, more, that he was more than man; for there seems to have been about Pilate a terror, a sensitive shrinking from the awful tragedy into which he was precipitated, and a desire at all hazards, if he could retain his sovereignty, his crown, and his duty to his master at Rome, to get rid of this terrible and painful business. We have only to read this chapter to see it. When, in the previous chapter, Pilate entered into the judgment hall, and asked Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world." Pilate then said, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born." And then he said, "Every one that is of the

truth hearth my voice." Pilate saith unto him, "What is truth?" an ancient question, still repeated in modern times; and too many, like Pilate, ask the question, "What is truth?" and like Pilate they move away regardless of the answer that may be given. He then said to the Jews, "Ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover; will ye therefore that I release unto you the king of the Jews?" And what an awful and monstrous response! When the Gentile prince offered to release the Lord of glory, the degraded Church, the Jewish Church, that had a true succession — not a sham succession, but a true succession, every priest of which could trace his genealogy demonstrably up to Aaron; a Church cradled amid miracles, a Church that had prophecies from heaven to teach it, yet had become so apostate that it cried with scarcely a protesting voice, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" And how simply is it added, with a quiet dignity that indicates the inspiration of the historian, "Now Barabbas was a robber."

Pilate, unable to get rid of this responsibility, took Jesus and scourged him. Now, if he was innocent, why scourge him? If he was not innocent, why hesitate to give him up to be crucified? He thought that by this piece of cruelty he might propitiate the Jews' wrath so far, and be able thus to let his victim escape. He then put on him a purple robe and a crown of thorns; and they said, "Hail, king of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands." And yet that crown of thorns was more beautiful than the Olympian coronet or the diadem of all the Cæsars: and that robe thrown upon him in mockery was resplendent with glory. It was our shame, not his; it was our degradation, not his. It was his shame that he suffered; it was his glory that the suffering was not for himself, but for us.

He then brought him forth, and Pilate owned that he could find no fault in him. What a testimony! Satan

could find nothing in him; the Jews falsely accused him; Pilate, that had examined him in every way, could find no fault in him. Heaven, earth, and hell attested the innocence of that Holy One of God. We would ask any man who doubts the reality of the atonement, this important question, How does it happen that the only innocent being that ever appeared upon the earth — confessedly innocent, heaven, earth, and hell attesting that he was so — how happens it, that he was the greatest sufferer that ever appeared upon earth? God's law is, that perfect innocence is perfect happiness; but here is a violation of that law; for here was perfect innocence with the intensest misery and suffering. Why? There is no explanation but one: it would be as great injustice on the part of God to let an innocent being suffer, as it would be to let a guilty being be happy. Yet this innocent being — confessedly innocent — was the greatest sufferer. The only solution of the apparent difficulty is, he suffered, but not for himself; he lived and died an atoning victim.

“Pilate, therefore, when he heard that saying” — that Jesus had made himself the Son of God — “was the more afraid.” Why was he the more afraid? What meaning is there in this? Why should he be afraid at it? The reason is this, that every Jew understood the Son of God to be equal to God; and you will recollect, in previous chapters, it is stated expressly that he blasphemed, because he made himself the Son of God. Now Pilate had in his own heart strong suspicions that he was higher than human. His wife, with that sensitive perception of what is true which is peculiar to woman, and far keener than in the bosom of man, saw through the assaults of the priests, and recognized in him, whose countenance was so marred, the majesty of God; and therefore she gave her husband advice, that he would have done well to have taken, to have nothing to do with that innocent man. He evidently felt the force of this; but he was one of those unhappy characters found in every



nation, that are invested with political and social power, not peculiar to any age, whose life is a constant struggle between what is expedient and what is duty. His conscience will not let him give full swing to his passions, his passions will not let him obey his conscience; and he has all the misery therefore of a sinner, without the least of the comfort of a saint. The life of such a one is a perpetual warfare, something like that of the borderers between England and Scotland in ancient days; when the two nations quarrelled, it was the borderers that were always first and last in the war, and the greatest sufferers of its effects. So those men that are borderers, if I may so call them, — who are constantly trying to keep their conscience and their passions in good order, or at peace with each other, which is impossible, — have the greatest misery, ceaseless disquiet, no comfort, and all they do ends only in calamity and disaster. Never forget, that the highest and holiest principle is always the truest expediency. Right principle is always expedient; what seems expedient, if it be not based on principle never is so. The nearest way to any given point is a straight line; but most people have got the notion in morals, which they would repudiate in mathematics, that a zigzag line, or a semicircle, is the nearest route from one point to another.

Then Jesus told Pilate that he could have no power except it was given by those that are above, and therefore he that betrayed him, and the Jews, had the greater sin. And see how shocking was the hypocrisy of the Jews; they tried to make it out that Jesus admitted Cæsar's supremacy whilst they were the greatest opponents of it, — when it suited their purpose, you would have thought these Jews were the most devoted adherents of Cæsar. Now they really hated the supremacy of Cæsar; but they were high churchmen, insisting on the supremacy of their church, when it suited their purpose; and they became high Erastians, insisting on

the supremacy of Cæsar, when it suited their purpose. They had no conscience, no principle; they were determined that the disturber of the people should be got rid of at all hazards; and they were prepared to forswear themselves, to make false charges, if they could only get rid of Jesus of Nazareth. Pilate yielded; Jesus was taken and crucified, an inscription, the inscription that was literal truth, was written on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews;" and that this might be understood by everybody, it was in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Then every truth in the Bible ought to be conveyed in the language that will teach everybody. In other words, everybody ought to hear the Gospel and have the Bible in the tongue wherein he was born. They ran to Pilate and wished to alter this inscription; but by an instinct that was true, or probably a result of an influence that was irresistible, he said, "What I have written I have written." And thus every minute prediction was fulfilled. They parted his garments; his coat was without seam, and they cast lots for it. How little like the relie-gathering of modern times. The garment of Jesus was parted into four shreds, the coat was cast lots for by the soldiers, probably sold to the nearest purchaser they could find; and then it disappears. There is here no canonization of the taste or passion for sacred relics. And if we had these garments — assumed, as we have seen, by the Church of Rome to be sacredly preserved still — the holiest treatment of them if they were in our possession, would be quietly to burn them. Sense is always craving to touch the hem of the Saviour's garment; faith is satisfied with loving him whom it has not seen; in whom, though now it sees him not, yet believing, it rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The expression that occurs in his dying moments is I think most touching. He sees John, the beloved disciple, and Mary, his mother, standing by; and he says to his

mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" That is, Look upon John, my disciple, as thy son henceforth, and treat him as such. And then he turned to the disciple and said, "Behold thy mother!" — do not worship her, as it has been inferred; but give her a home — a homeless mother a home to lodge in. How little like the worship that is given to Mary in modern times!

We read then, that there was a vessel filled with vinegar, and when Jesus had received of it to satisfy thirst, he bowed his head, and said, "It is finished;" and gave up the ghost. Now it has been proved here, that Jesus died in full physical strength and vigor; and the remark has been made from a careful comparison of the incidents relating to the death of Jesus, that the real cause of his death was literally the heart bursting under the weight and pressure of that agony with which it was loaded; that he died a victim in the full strength and vigor of manhood; and literally it was not so much the spirit taken from him, as that he gave up the ghost, and voluntarily died a sacrifice for our sins, a satisfaction to God's justice. The word "ghost," I need not add, is the old English or Saxon word for "spirit." You must have noticed if you have travelled in Germany, that the expression for an inn is *ghast haus* — literally, "ghost house," that is, of a guest. And so the soul of man is called the guest of the body. It is a very beautiful thought. The body is the *caravanserai*, the temporary building; the soul, or the spirit, is the guest that is living in it for a little, lodging in it for a season, until the tent is struck, and the inhabitant pursues his way to his happy and his eternal home.

How very beautiful are the two incidents at the close of the chapter. Joseph of Arimathea had long been a disciple, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. He now comes out. Nicodemus, that came at first by night to Jesus also comes by day. We learn from these two incidents that there may be real Christianity with great imperfections. A man may

be a true Christian, and yet afraid to confess it. I do not justify his fear to confess it; it is sinful, it is wrong. But one may be a true Christian, and yet there may be drawbacks and defects very marked. There is no sunshine without shadow; gold is not workable without alloy; and there is no Christian without a mixture of imperfection. Nicodemus once would come by night, he was afraid to come by day; Joseph would pray and love in secret. But when the testing hour came, both emerged from their cowardice and from the shadow, and came boldly forward as the disciples of Jesus. A great calamity brings out character that has hitherto been dormant; they felt therefore that this last and severing stroke was all that was needed to make them come forward; and as they would not, or could not, when all was bright and prosperous, they now have the courage to step forward, and advocate a cause when everybody was opposed to it.

## CHAPTER XIX. 25-27.

A GROUP. — SUFFERINGS OF JESUS. — THE WOMEN. — WOMAN'S CHARACTER. — CALMNESS OF THE VIRGIN MARY. — HER DISAPPOINTMENT. — WORDS OF JESUS TO MARY. — HIS ENTIRE POVERTY. — COMPENSATION. — SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE ON MARY.

IN this chapter appears a remarkable group, every component member of which is a study.

“ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.” John xix. 25-27.

Here is, perhaps one of the most memorable groups recorded in any chapter of the history of the Church of Christ, or of the world of mankind; a group that never had a precedent before it, and that never since has had a parallel in the experience of mankind. There hung upon the cross in all its unprovoked and undeserved agony, the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners. Our sins were borne by him there; their burden was most heavy; and the ingratitude, the sense of ingratitude from them he came to die for, created within him a sorrow far more bitter than the sufferings he endured without. Nothing, nothing but the nature of his death, explains so extraordinary torture; nothing but the fact that the spotless Lamb came to suffer for the stray, the stained, and the guilty flock, explains the unprecedented sufferings of One against whom Pilate had no real charge; at whose door

Satan, who had tried him, could lay no sin; and over whose head the voice from heaven pronounced his acquittal and his innocence, when it said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." If Christ was not a vicarious sufferer, we have here in the providence of God the only specimen of absolute innocence made the greatest sufferer that ever appeared among mankind.

Explain the cross on any other hypothesis than this, that Christ died an atonement, and God's law has been broken, God's justice has been unjust. His law is that perfect innocence is perfect immunity from pain, from sorrow, and from death. But perfect innocence was here; and yet with God's sanction, at least in God's silence, the highest innocence was the greatest sufferer. There is no solution of the mystery, save in this; that he was cut off, but not for himself; that he died an atonement for our sins, a sacrifice, that we might be saved.

The next section of the group consisted of females — the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and others — who were assembled around the cross. How remarkable had been the career of these females. They followed him to the cross; they preceded the apostles and evangelists to the tomb on the resurrection morn. In these trying scenes women eclipsed the men that were the followers of Jesus. Strange it is that the nature that is most sensitive, when sustained by a powerful and dominant sense of duty, seems ablest and most magnanimous to endure, and even triumph. In the annals of the world woman has thought what man has only dreamed, and done what man has only thought, and triumphed where man has without exception and signally failed. If she was first in our ruin, hers was no merit, but hers was precedence at the scene of our restoration. And ever since, who knows not that the chambers of the weeping, the vigils of the sick, the pillows of the dying, have never been without her presence; and rarely without alleviation and refreshment from

it? At the bidding of duty or affection, not only Scripture, but all history will tell you, she can go through scenes where man sinks desponding, discouraged, and absolutely helpless. Her affection does not falter in the worst, it does not weary in the best of times; it does not give way in the most protracted of the scenes of human suffering. This was exemplified at the cross; it has had its succession ever since. Mary, the wife of Cleophas, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin Mary constituted the group that stood firm in that hour of agony unprecedented in history, unparalleled in the experience of man.

In the group was one whose name has been more mentioned in the history of Christendom than that of any other; and whose character has been degraded in the practical estimate of man by the outrageous offering of homage and of adoration wickedly paid to it; I allude to the Virgin Mary. It is the place she occupies here that has suggested the importance of speaking of her, and the estimate we should form of her character from the transactions recorded in the 25th and 26th verses of this chapter. And one cannot help noticing in the first place the contrast between the simple story of the evangelist and the extravagant fables and stories of the Church of Rome. If you visit any continental cathedral, as, for instance, that of Bruges, Antwerp, or Brussels, or other towns where the chiefest productions of the ancient masters are, you will find that wherever there is a crucifixion, or a crucifix, you have Mary in agony, in distress, with dishevelled hair, indicative, according to the painter's idea, of great disturbance and terrible pain and suffering. It may have been true; it was true that she suffered; but in the record in this book there is no statement of any thing of extravagance; no excited exclamation, no passionate execration towards enemies, no cries of deep grief. All is calm, quiet, subdued; not the calm of indifference or of stoicism, but a grief too deep for tears, an agony

too intense for expression. It was the silence of an overwhelming calamity, not the rude and frantic expression of a transient sorrow. And therefore the sketch of the evangelist is true to nature, worthy of the scene; the sketches of Romish painters are extravagant, exaggerated, and many of them absurd.

In looking at this group, and at her to whom I have referred in the midst of it, one cannot but conceive how she must have felt as she beheld him whom she regarded as her son, but who occupied a far loftier sphere, and was clothed with a far grander nature: at that hour she must have been deeply and bitterly disappointed. She was then a very unenlightened Christian, like John and Matthew, and the rest of the apostles. She had grace enough to save her; she had not the grace that was given after the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, and gave them a new mission, as he enriched their minds with a richer and a more glorious wisdom. But when she looked upon this scene she must have felt that the only prophecy that related to Jesus that she could trace fulfilled was that which Simeon uttered, "A sword shall pierce through thine own heart also." No doubt she asked, Is this the close of the life of one of whom it was written, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son?" Is this the finale of a life that angels chanted, whom shepherds came to adore, to whom the Magi offered incense and gifts from afar? Is this the end of one who calmed the sea by his word, who beckoned to the wild waves, and they lay still like babes at his holy feet? Is this the close of a life that raised the dead, that opened the grave, whose birth to me is inscrutable, whose life has been so much above the ordinary level? Are all my hopes blasted; are all prophecies confuted? Is it after all not he — in the language of the disciples journeying to Emmaus — that should have redeemed Israel? I have no doubt that these, and similar doubts to these, passed through the mind of that sorrowing



woman, that afflicted mother, while she stood by the cross, and gazed on him who endured its agony alone.

Jesus witnessing Mary; instantly addressed her, and said, "Woman, behold thy son." Not, "Behold me, thy Son;" but "Behold John, thy Son," evidently from what follows; for he said to John, "Behold thy mother." In Roman Catholic books of devotion it is quoted sometimes, as if Jesus said to Mary, "Behold thy Son" — look to me, the sufferer. But it was not so. He said, "Behold him who will be to thee a son and a protector in this weary world." There is something very grand in this. "Woman, behold thy son."

He reminds her of the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, when he began his ministerial function, and Mary interposed, and he said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" that is, "My relationship to thee, and thy relationship to me, are now superseded by a greater and a higher one." And so he speaks to her here, "Woman, do not regard me as thy son. I sustain a far higher office, a far grander relationship. You are a poor widow, indeed; you will need support. Behold my beloved disciple, John; who has been my friend, and will act towards thee as if he were thy son, thy only son." And he says to John, "Behold her, and treat her as a mother; with all the affection, the reverence, the regard with which an affectionate son would treat his affectionate mother."

Now these words of Jesus are most remarkable: Amidst the absorbing scenes of the cross, he recollects that Mary would now be left desolate. He thinks of finding for her an earthly home whilst he is paying by his blood the awful price of her everlasting home. He thinks of a thing so minute that an ordinary sufferer would never have had time to recollect it. And whilst engaged in a tragedy so grand that all eternity will commemorate it, he turns aside for one moment to think of an incident so minute that one wonders that he thought it worth his while to take notice of it at all.

And yet, how like God was it, who descends in nature to polish the wing of a beetle, or to powder the wing of a butterfly, or to shape the sting of a bee, with a precision, a beauty, an exquisite care, as great as if he had nothing else to do in the world but to accomplish these tiny and beautiful processes. Is it not true in nature that the butterfly seems to have had as much care expended in beautifying it as a fixed star has in arranging and polishing it? Does not the law strike us as lying legible upon every acre of our world, that there is nothing so minute that God does not perfect it as if it had occupied all his care, while there is nothing so great as to be beyond his reach, his cognizance, and his control? God, speaking from the ends of the earth as Creator, shows that minute things and magnificent things are equally his care; God speaking from the cross shows that the purchase of an eternal home for a lost race, and the providing of a temporary home for a suffering mother, were equally within the reach of his regards, equally occupying his heart, and engaging his sympathy.

Notice in this fact an instance and proof of filial affection. Jesus was the perfect man whilst he was also God. He acted as truly as the Son of Mary as he acted as the Son of God; and he was as perfect in fulfilling the relationships of the lower level as he was in fulfilling the relationships of the higher. There is no nook or cranny in the human heart, no eddy or winding in the stream and current of social being; no relationship in life, that Christ did not enter, and on which he has not left the footprints of his presence; examples, precedents, encouragements for all that shall follow in future generations. And if there be one affection more beautiful than another, it is the responsive affection that a son or a daughter bears to a mother. Exhaust society of this beautiful relationship, and it will corrupt and go to ruin in very decay. The bonds and links of life are these beautiful relationships; and whoever tries to snap them in sunder,

or to waste, exhaust, and wear them out, does violence to society itself, and is guilty of treachery to its first and its noblest interests. Jesus is the example of the perfect brother; the precedent of the perfect son; the holy, the harmless, the undefiled in every relationship of life; God manifest in the flesh, the grand ideal to which we should ever soar, after which we should ever strive, and perfect conformity to which will be the coronal of Christian life when time and things temporal shall be no more.

Let us notice here, the thorough poverty of the Son of God. He was constrained to say before his crucifixion, "The foxes of the earth have holes; the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." And in his agony, or, if I might use the expression, on his death-bed, the only thing he had to bequeathe in his solemn and last testament was a mother without a home to a disciple that loved him, but had little to spare for himself, and less for the necessities of others. How remarkable it is, and what a stain upon all that man glories in, that the noblest home on which the sun ever shone, which had no precedent before it, and since has had no parallel, was poverty-stricken, poor, and lowly, and needy. This fact strips wealth of its glare, shows that piety may be set in poverty; and that where there is no bright fire to make the roof-tree shine, there may be the warmth of heaven to raise the temperature of the hearts of the inmates, and to give them a gladness and a joy that the world cannot give, and that the world cannot take away. How truly has poverty been consecrated by the life; how truly have riches been cast down by the poverty of the Son of God, the Son of Mary!

In all God's providential dealings there is always a compensatory element. Jesus is taken away from supporting Mary, and John takes his place, to be the protector, the friend, and the help of Mary. He never takes away in his providence any blessing without giving either a heart that

is quiet in the absence of it, or another blessing that will supersede or be a substitute for it. In God's providential dealings he takes away the sight of the eye; and he quickens the sensibility of the ear. He takes away the sensibility of the ear; but he quickens the delicacy of the touch. And if he has, in many a case, taken away all together, he has left nevertheless more than a compensation for all the feeling that gives birth to the magnificent sentiment, "The Lord gave; and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Jesus left; John was given to Mary to occupy his place.

Jesus plainly regarded ministration to Mary not as a burden, but as a privilege. If we have a right estimate of what Jesus was, we regard the heaviest duty that he enjoins less as a load difficult to be borne, more as a privilege we should run, like a strong man, joyously and gladly to enjoy. John was specially loved; therefore John was singled out to be specially laden. On his best soldiers Jesus lays generally the heaviest loads. It is the truest, the bravest, and the best that are placed in the van; it is the most beloved that is here burdened with the greatest responsibility. Some of the rest of the college of apostles were richer, but none loved so much, because none were so much loved before. Hence Jesus does not select Nicodemus, a disciple, and a very rich one; nor yet Joseph of Arimathea, another disciple, and a very great one; but he selects for the most responsible burden him who had risen most in grace; as if to be a parallel occurrence to that beautiful instance in the 11th chapter of John, "He whom thou lovest is" — what? Rich — great — successful — strong? No; but — "sick;" nay, sick because thou lovest him. "For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" So he that loved most here, and was loved most before, is laden most with duty and responsibility. But John felt the load light for the love that he bore him, as Jacob felt seven years to be as seven days, for the affection that he had to Rachel.

We read next, that John, the moment that he received the charge, took her to his own home — John instantly complied with the prescription. He did not say, “Master, shall I be able to provide for another inmate for my home? Shall I have wealth enough for the years to find bread for my home, still more for an addition to that home?” He did not say, “I must go home, and talk the matter over there, and see if there be room.” He did not say, “Shall I be able to gain bread for so many mouths to eat?” but the instant that duty was laid upon him, he complied with the prescription, knowing well that them that honor God he will honor; and that if we do his will and seek his kingdom first, all other things will be added unto us. Therefore, in the language of one of old, “Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.” When you are asked to engage in something that is questionable, study, pause, hesitate, discuss it. When you are asked to do what is plainly duty, do not interpose an argument between the hand and the purse; but obey impulse. Do not listen to logic; it is a grace that the heart should regulate, not the head. “Give to him that asketh.”

Now after Mary was thus taken to the home of John, we read no more of her — and I think the very silence of Scripture is most significant in this matter — till she appears in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication: with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and the brethren.” She takes her place with the rest of the Christian congregation, a worshipper before the footstool, not a goddess elevated to a throne. I know not any thing that is more decisive evidence of the inspiration of this Book and the inspiration of Him who is its subject, and of those that wrote it, than this one fact, — that wherever Mary occurs

in the Gospels, it is, if not to find a home and a shelter in the midst of her poverty, to receive a rebuke, however tender it may have been, yet real, for interposing her shadow before or beside the Son of God. In the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, when she tried to interpose the jurisdiction of a mother, and to dictate to her son a miracle, — “They have no wine,” — the reply was, “Woman” — the language of respect, but indicating the lapsing of the human relationship into the divine — “woman, what have I to do with thee?” or, as it ought to be translated, “What hast thou to do with me?” As if he would tell her, “Now, I begin the hour and power of my agony and bloody sweat. I must tread the winepress alone, and of the people none must be with me. I must walk life’s flinty road alone, and not even a mother can there comfort me. I must suffer alone; I must pay the penalty alone; I must endure the death of the cross alone: and therefore I must have all the glory alone throughout everlasting ages. Not a mother’s tear must mingle with the blood of her incarnate and her dying Son. Mine is all the agony, and mine must be all the glory. Therefore, Mary, retire into the shadow. Your relationship is lost, your jurisdiction is gone. I am now alone with the Father.”

On another occasion, when one came to him, and said, “Thy mother and thy brethren are standing without;” and on another occasion when they said, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee;” his answer was most significant. “Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and do it.” How is it possible, then, to fail to see that Jesus anticipated by a previous arrangement the awful Mariolatry that would be substituted for living and scriptural religion? They said, “Blessed is she, because of her relationship to thee, and thy relationship to her;” but he said, “There is a tie far stronger, far brighter, that supersedes it, and shall last when it is past and gone for ever. Rather, blessed is

the humblest Christian woman, in the lapse of the next eighteen centuries, that reads my word and does it." And after that Mary disappears. Not an allusion to her is in the Epistles; not a hint about what was due to her in the Apocalypse. And she herself, — with all the spirit, the affliction, and the love of a Christian of the noblest order, for that she was; she was privileged, highly privileged in being the mother of the Son of man; but she was privileged far more in being one of the most quiet, gentle, consistent, holy, happy Christians that ever adorned the Church of Christ from that day to this, — retired in silence. And so little idea had she of being worshipped, that she gave expression to her own happy feelings in the language of her heart, when she said, "My soul doth magnify" — not myself, but — "the Lord; and my spirit doth rejoice" — not in my privileges, but — "in God my Saviour." "My Saviour!" Who needs a Saviour? A sinner; and so she owned herself a sinner, dependent on a Saviour; a worshipper magnifying him: she had not the remotest idea that she would be placed where Rome has placed her, in the room of God himself.

I utter these words not in the popular way in which they are spoken. I have the evidence in the celebrated Psalter of St. Bonaventure. I have got all the editions of it, at least most of them, from the year 1400, in Latin, — the very first impression printed after the death of the saint, — down to French and Italian editions, printed in 1852 and 1853. I have got somewhere about fifteen or sixteen copies and editions of it. And every one of these books, sanctioned by the Church of Rome, written by a person canonized in that Church, for whom there is this collect repeated every July in the Roman Catholic Church; "O God, who didst give blessed Bonaventure to be a minister of salvation, grant that we may be instructed by what he taught, and benefited by his intercession." And what did

he teach? Why, he takes that magnificent thing, the Psalter, the Psalms of David; and out of every Psalm he expunges, deliberately, most carefully, without a single failure, "God," "Lord;" and puts in most carefully, without a single omission, "Mary," "Our Lady." For instance, he says in the 95th Psalm, "O come, let us sing unto our Lady; let us heartily rejoice in the Virgin that brings us salvation." In the 51st Psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O Lady, who art called the Mother of mercies; and according to thy great compassion forgive me all my sin." In the 110th Psalm, "The Lord said unto my Lady, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make all thine enemies thy footstool." And more than that; Dr. Wiseman has acknowledged it, and quoted it, and sanctioned it, and commended it to the faithful in his diocese — the so-called diocese in which we have the honor to be placed as a congregation and church at this moment. I ask, is there not in the treatment of Mary in this blessed Book, a prophetic anticipation of the homage that would be given to her? And the homage is not only defended by him, but also that acute and powerful intellect, Dr. Newman, who left the Church of England because he says it has not the comfort that the Church of Rome has, delivered a series of lectures, one of which is upon — the glories of the Son of God? no, "The Glories of Mary." In it he proceeds to show that Mary is the Mother of God. This is false. How can a creature be the mother of the Creator? She is the mother of Jesus and of his humanity; he is God, but Mary is not the mother of God. And then he makes the remark, "The Church agrees to this, that the Son and mother went together. And the experience of three centuries has proved that they who have honored Mary have worshipped the Son, while they who cease to confess the Son begin by scoffing at Mary."

Now I never heard the Protestant Church scoff at Mary. When I speak of Mary, if a Roman Catholic be present, I



always call her the blessed Mary. She is blessed; all generations will call her blessed. But that is not deifying her. "Blessed are the pure in heart; blessed are the meek." I have no objection to call her blessed any more than I have to call the pure and the meek so. Never withhold the concession of a prejudice that does not compromise a principle, when it will conciliate an opponent, or make those listen whose hearts are closed to your arguments otherwise. Dr. Newman goes on to say, that "She is the defence of the Deity of Jesus. Mary," he says, "is a specimen, and more than a specimen of what man was before his fall. She was sinless and immaculate." Now how he can show that, I cannot see. Jesus was immaculate; because, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee; and that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be the Lord Christ." But she was a woman, born after the manner of men, and therefore a sinner; and she acknowledged herself to be so. He adds, "It was she that triumphed where Eve had fallen. Nothing is too high for her to whom God owes his life." What a monstrous notion is here! It is said of the ancient Spartans that when they wished to keep their sons from drunkenness, they made their Helots, or their slaves, drunk, that their sons might see what a horrible and debasing vice drunkenness was. And so, if you wish to see what the intoxicating cup of Rome makes the noblest spirit, the most gifted and powerful intellects, read the writings of Dr. Newman, or Archdeacon Manning, when they were members of the Protestant Church; and then study their portraits after they have been drugged by the intoxication of the Church of Rome. The transition is so terrible that you need no argument of mine to make you thankful that you are privileged to belong to a Church where the Bible is open, where the Gospel is free, and where Christ is all and in all.

And, not satisfied with this, he goes on to say, "She underwent death." He admits so much. Now there is dis-

union in his Church here. Some say she did not die, and all that she was assumed into heaven. "But though she died," says Dr. Newman, "she died not as others die. She died, but her death was a mere fact, not an effect; and when it was over, it ceased to be." Now where did he get this information? Not in the Bible. Her death even there is not recorded. And if her death was a fact, why was it a fact? What is that fact the evidence of? The echo of a truth. And what was that truth? "Sin entered, and death by sin." If she was immaculate, and died, she must have died as an atonement as Christ did: if she died not as an atonement, then she died because she was a sinner, as men die. And therefore her death was not, as he sophistically styles it, a fact only, but an effect also. If it was a fact, it must have been an effect, and the effect of sin. "Sin entered into the world, and so death passed upon all men; for all," not excepting the Virgin Mary, "have sinned." I quote these words of his, and of the Psalter to which I have referred, merely to show how complete is the contrast between the simple and beautiful record of Mary's life in the word of God, and the niche in which Mary is placed in the Roman Catholic Church. One wonders how it is possible for sane men to accept the Mary of Rome; still more marvellous that such men as Archdeacon Manning, for instance, should ever have passed over to such a wretched superstition. When one reads his early writings, so beautiful, so full of love, though often wrong, one is grieved to see such a terrible eclipse. I can only explain it upon an awful principle; and a principle that explains many of the perversions of the day. Men begin first of all to play with Rome, to tamper with her. They go and see her shows; they are tired of the opera, or they think the opera very secular, and they want a more spiritual one; they are tired of the world's pleasures, and they want other pleasures. They visit the operatic

worship of Rome. By and by they try to plead and apologize for it, and explain it. And it is a great law, that if you go upon Satan's ground, and make apologies for Satan's acts, and tamper with what you ought to renounce, reprobate, and shrink from, you run the risk, that has been often exemplified, of becoming victims to your own folly; and the awful result takes place, written by an apostle himself, — "Wherefore, because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie;" the awful retribution of past sins, the consummation of inconsistency just where it ceases to be indiscretion, and becomes crime.

## CHAPTER XIX. 38-40.

TYPES OF CHARACTER. — TIMID CHRISTIANS. — PROGRESS. — REASONS OF RETIREMENT.

THE Gospel is full of characters. Each is a precedent, a beacon, and a lesson. Here are two:—

“And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.”

Here are two characters, representatives and types of one distinctive character, in common, “Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews,” and Nicodemus, a chief ruler and rabbi of Israel, a disciple also, but who could only come to Jesus by night, to learn from his lips the words that never fell from the lips of man before. At the close of the Gospel of St. Luke, we studied one of these characters, and the features in its composition therein delineated, “There was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: (the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.” These features and characteristics delineated there in the person of Joseph, I have already

dwelt upon. The peculiar feature incidental to both in the passage here selected, is their secret discipleship or their hidden Christianity, and this I will take as the special topic of my present remarks. We have seen Joseph of Arimathea, at the close of the Gospel of Luke; the other character, Nicodemus, appears twice in this very Gospel. He appears first in the well-known passage in the third chapter of John, where we read, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews," a person of high ecclesiastical dignity, "the same came to Jesus by night," afraid to be seen coming to one so lowly, and so little thought of, by day — and began that discourse with him which ended in the instructive lessons contained in that most precious chapter.

We have the same character, Nicodemus, turning up again in the seventh chapter of the Gospel of St. John, where we read that when Jesus was unjustly and unfairly dealt with, this Christian, afraid to make himself prominent, shrinking even from making himself known as a Christian, yet, when Jesus was unjustly accused, stood forward and said, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" And the Evangelist calls up there the character, the title he had earned by his pusillanimity, for such it was; "Nicodemus, the same that came unto Jesus by night, being one of them, said, Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" and then, "they answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee?" He was almost detected then, — almost found out to be a Christian. He had said a thing over bold for the world's discretion, too candid for the world not to see through it, and there was nearly detected, what he should have declared, the fact that he was a Christian. And again in the passage which we have read his character is brought up, "And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh."

We notice in the character of Nicodemus, obvious growth. At first he comes by night, and says, "Rabbi, we believe that thou art a teacher come from God," — that I am convinced of. After a little more acquaintance with the truth, he takes a bolder step, and interposes amid the infuriated crowd, priests, and Sadducees, and rabble, and says, "Doth our law judge any man before he get a fair hearing?" Here was the advocacy of Christ. And now at last his Christianity breaks out in its brightest lustre, when he takes the crucified, believed by all about him to be a malefactor, identifies himself with Christ in his shame, his humiliation, and his lowliness, and makes provision for the burial of that body which was the shrine in which Deity itself for a season dwelt. We thus see that real Christianity grows. The dawn, the grey and the misty dawn — the brightening morning — the meridian day. But still it was a faulty Christianity. Real as it was, true as it was, it was yet faulty. Either he ought not to have been a Christian at all, or he ought to have been one openly. Either the thing was bad, and he ought to have had nothing to do with it, or the thing was good, and it ought to have governed, and directed, and given tone and shape to his whole character and conduct in every place.

Another of precisely the same character was Joseph of Arimathea. He did not come by night, but he was a Christian "secretly, for fear of the Jews." To ascertain what that meant, we have to refer to those passages in which the expression "for fear of the Jews" occurs. The first passage that I find it in is in the 9th chapter of this very Gospel, at the 22d verse; where we read, "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews." The explanation is given, "For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." We have the same thing explained in the 12th chapter, at the 42d verse, where we read, "Nevertheless,

among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." You will therefore see that Joseph of Arimathea, being a person of high consideration, — Nicodemus an ecclesiastic, Joseph of Arimathea a distinguished ruler, wealthy, powerful, respected, looked up to, — naturally felt that if he allied himself openly and publicly with Jesus of Nazareth, the consequence would be his degradation from his lofty position in the estimate of the people. They would say, "What! one of our great nobles identifying himself with such a sect; descending to worship with a company of fishermen, and publicans, and tax-gatherers, and the very lowest of the people;" — for it was the common people then that constituted almost the whole body of Christians; — "this is too bad: he acts contrary to the customs of the fathers."

And this so acted upon both, that the great ecclesiastic would not openly descend from the chair of Moses to listen at the feet of Jesus; and the great patrician could not lay his glory humbly in the dust in the presence of him who he believed in his conscience was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of Israel.

You see then how very careful we should be in judging. Because we do not see all the Christian virtues we could desire, or because Christianity is not expressed by people so eloquently as it sometimes is, or because it is not lived so openly and emphatically as it ought to be, we must not say there is no Christianity; but rather prudently and charitably say, it may be Christianity, yet secret, for fear of the world. Criminal such secrecy is; but nevertheless we see what we cannot deny, that secrecy of character may yet be consistent, or rather, may coexist, with reality of Christian character. These two men were undoubted Christians, undoubted believers on Jesus, and yet they had not moral courage to

avow their adhesion to his cause, their confidence in his merits, their readiness to follow him through good report and through bad report. We do not justify such secrecy, we condemn it; all that I ask is that we should be slow to judge where we might only be mistaken, or be guilty of that uncharitableness which proscribes instead of prays, and pronounces sentence instead of wishing well.

Let us see if we can ascertain some of the reasons why people are Christians secretly. The fear of the Jews is a nonentity now, but the substance of that fear is undoubtedly a reality still. What is the reason that many people — not many I hope, but some — like Joseph of Arimathea, distinguished for their rank; or, like Nicodemus, elevated in ecclesiastical power; are afraid of being found out, or hesitate to avow whose they are, on what side they are, and that Christianity is not only the creed they subscribe, but the life that they feel within them? The first reason that I would venture to mention is that we do not see living religion; for I mean by Christianity — let me explain — not the fashionable profession of outward ecclesiastical form, which is current enough, and which anybody can accept, without the least sacrifice or the least descent. It is quite fashionable now to be baptized; it is fashionable enough to go to the communion table, to go to church; anybody can do that, there is no sacrifice there, there is no great martyrdom experienced in this, — at least in very few cases may the martyrdom occur. But what we mean by Christianity is the proper avowal, the avowal, when required, of Protestant, evangelical, out and out Christianity. That is what we mean by it. Well now, what is the reason that many are real, devoted, earnest Christians in our day yet do not venture to avow it; or are so by night, but not by day, for fear of something external to themselves? The first reason probably is, that the majority of mankind is not yet upon the side of true religion; and we all naturally like to go with the cur-



rent; we do not like to have to breast it, to stem it, to resist it. We all like to be like other people, and to think with other people; and, to use the proverb, to do in Rome as Rome does, and in Constantinople as the Mufti does. We all like this; it gives us no trouble, it is the easiest thing in the world; if we only keep with the stream we shall be floated downwards. The law of gravitation in the natural world, and the law of sin in the spiritual world, make it most easy to be the followers of the majority. Now the majority are not upon the side of true religion; they evidently show that they are not so. And when we learn this, we feel it a struggle to take up a position that the world will not accept, to take a course that the world will not fall in with, and to stand for principles that the majority can see no meaning, force, or reality in.

Another reason perhaps is, that the majority of the rich, and the great, and the noble, are not on the side of living religion. It was so in the days of Paul, and I fear it will be so till we shall all be righteous. It is written, "Not many mighty, not many rich, not many noble are called." We are thankful there are some, but the fact is that there is not a great multitude. The day will come when the noble shall feel most ennobled by the acceptance of the Gospel, when the rich shall feel richest in the possession of Christ Jesus, and all shall be righteous. But that day is not come, and we know that in this country especially, the example of the influential in rank has great power; the precedent of the rich, the great, and the noble has great effect; and hence, when you find the noble and the great accepting living religion, and appearing at a communion table, not in form, but from the deep impulse of the heart, you have an influence there, the weight of which — I do not say whether it ought to be, but that it is everybody knows — and the limits of which it is impossible to calculate. But at present the fact is not so. There is a mighty change for the better among the higher

classes. They begin to feel now that a mere title will not give power, and precedent, and greatness; that it must be sustained by intrinsic merits, literary excellence, and knowledge; and when these things exist together with living Christianity, then the influence is most powerful. But at present not many noble, not many rich, not many wise in this world are called, and the tendency of thousands is to go where the great, the noble, the rich, the wealthy go; and to shrink from an avowal that will not have an authority where fashion has its chief and its central seat. But yet it ought not to be so, for truth is covered with a fadeless glory, when her only advocates are martyrs, and captives, and prisoners; and falsehood is base and degrading even when kings and princes bow down to give it worship.

Another reason why men are Christians in secret, or are afraid of avowing Christ openly, is that they are afraid of what such confession will necessitate and imply. They say, "If we avow our Christianity we must keep up the consistent course that that avowal demands. We must have a consistent walk; we must adopt a self-denying course; we must disoblige some that we very highly esteem. We must walk separate from some that want us to walk with them. We must ever act under the impulse of a constraining, a ceaseless, a heavenly principle. We are not altogether prepared for this. We know it is our duty; our principles impel us in that direction. But we should like to wait, to pause a little; we should like to be Christians a little longer by night; we should like to believe a little longer in secret. We hope the day will come when we shall openly declare ourselves, but it is not come yet." Others again do not avow their Christianity, from a sensitive fear of professing more than they actually feel, and can keep up. I believe that this is not unfrequent; and when one weighs this fear, we learn it is more a mistake than a crime. The fear of

making a profession that we cannot consistently maintain, is a very estimable feature ; it is a mistaken one, yet still it is such as one can easily palliate, and may easily forgive. But if I address any such, you forget that the same principle that puts you in the right course, the same grace that gives you power to avow your adoption of that course, will give you strength as your day is, and be sufficient for you, to enable you manfully, and nobly, and consistently to uphold the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

Another cause of this secret religion is the dread of reproach — the dread of reproach and persecution for Christ's sake. We know that just in proportion as Nicodemus became bold, in the same proportion he was laid open to reproach. “Art thou also one of them? art thou also of Galilee?” And men who stand high in this world, men who have sensitive minds — and some minds unsanctified are sensitive, and when sanctified they are still more delicately so — do not like reproach. They do not like to be called fanatics, methodists, over religious, or by some other name which the world selects for them. They do not like to be persecuted, not by fagot and flame, but by the sly innuendo, by the smart paragraph, by the clever witticism, by being turned into ridicule. But you may depend upon it that the day is come when people must just go straight forward, doing all the good that they can, fulfilling the duty that devolves upon them, standing fixed and immovable by their principles ; and the shame and reproach that comes in the path of duty will be like the cloud of a day, it will give place to the sunshine of to-morrow ; and the persecution that meets you in the path of duty is a persecution that you can easily endure, because sustained by a principle that will enable you to master it ; and the witticism, the innuendo, the sarcasm, the satire of Sunday newspapers, is the highest compliment that can be paid to a Christian ; it is irresistible evidence that he is doing some damage to the enemy's cause, or the

enemy would not so repel the assault ; and therefore, whenever you are assailed by the good, when you are spoken evil of by the good, examine yourselves ; there is something wrong, or they have become uncharitable. But when you are reproached by the bad, then rejoice and be exceeding glad ; it is evidence you are doing some good, or the enemy would not resist and oppose. But still there are persons who are not John Knoxes, or Martin Luthers, or men that can bear the power of reproach and contumely and contempt, but who have shrinking, hesitating natures, intense reserve, who do not wish to live in the light. It was so in former days. Peter was the manly controversialist ; John, who was with him, was the meek, retiring, quiet disciple. So in the days of the Reformation, Martin Luther was the hero, always in the van ; Melancthon, though more learned, far more learned than Luther, as devotedly Christian, yet could not carry on a discussion with a single priest, nor venture to attack publicly a single Popish abuse. It was his nature, it was his sensitive temper, and he could not overcome it. It may have been his misfortune, or it may have been his sin ; it was rather the former. So it has been, and so it will be. But each is answerable for the gift that he has, and those that cannot eloquently speak Christianity, may quietly and beautifully live it. Each has his own talent, each his own sphere. But if reproached or persecuted for Christ's sake, your encouragement is not mine, it is not what I have said, but it is that of our Blessed Lord, who said in the Sermon on the Mount, " Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." What should you do ? Be very much vexed, very much annoyed, very much cast down ? Just the reverse : " Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." Why your reward in heaven ? Because evidently you are doing good ; your light is shining, the darkness comprehends it not ; and therefore " re-

joyce, and be exceeding glad." You are in the company of them which are the Lord's, "for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." What does a man care in a well-roofed house, that the hail beats upon its roof? It cannot touch him. What cares the sailor in a noble ship, with open sea room, for the storm? It cannot touch him. The Christian has within him a compensatory joy that ought to make him brave the storm, face the opposition, and be satisfied that secret Christianity is not the highest aspect of Christian character. If it be infirmity, it may be forgiven; if it be criminal, it must be renounced; that they who come by night at last may avow Christ by day, and they that are secretly, for fear of the Jews, may be Christians manfully, in spite of all mankind.

What is there in Christianity that should make any person hesitate openly to avow it? I have shown what are personal reasons; I might now show that there is nothing in this religion of ours that ought to make us secret Christians. What is there to be ashamed of? Not surely of its Author. True, he suffered, but it was for us; true, he was a Man of Sorrows, but he was no less the mighty God: true, he was laid in a grave, but he was yet the Occupant of a throne. He was God as well as man, a sacrifice to the fury of men, that he might be the Saviour of the souls of mankind. There is nothing in One so holy, so great, so spotless, so perfect, so self-sacrificing, for any one to keep secret. It is worth publishing; to be his disciple is worth proclaiming; and to be so secretly seems inconsistency. In the doctrines that he taught, there is nothing that one need keep secret. Nations prosper as they are inspired by them; man grows happy as his nature grows holy. And wherever the principles and precepts of Christianity are most deeply written, there the fruits that beautify the social world, and bless mankind, are most richly developed. Heaven embosoms the earth just in the ratio in which its inhabitants take hold of the Gospel of Christ.

There is nothing that we may keep secret about its progress. If it had been promoted by fraud, like Romanism, then I might keep it secret; or with the scimitar, like Mahometanism, then I might keep it to myself. But it has made its way by the majesty of its own truth and greatness. It has gathered its noblest trophies and obtained its greatest triumphs by the power of truth, impressed by the power of the Holy Ghost. It has never used force, it has never sanctioned the sword. These things have been used in its name, but in its injured name, and in spite of its sown decisions; and therefore, instead of keeping such a religion secret, there is every reason in the world for boldly avowing it.

If the learned and the wise that adhere to it are not the majority of its adherents, yet it is true that more learned men are on the side of Christianity than there have been for a century before. The star still guides the learned of the earth to the lowly manger of the Son of God; and the wisest, at this moment, the best and the greatest spirits, are the acceptors and professors of the Gospel of Christ. And in all probability not to discourage us, there are more in the world than we are aware of. There are seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal, when, like the prophet, we may be saying, "I only am left." Let us not judge; let us not denounce as unchristian them that do not proclaim their religion upon the house-top. Yet let us admit that though secrecy of profession may be compatible with the reality of Christian life, it is a grievous stain, a great insult, and the sooner it is renounced and abjured the better. Calculate the cost, estimate what follows, and then avow boldly—not ostentatiously, but boldly, when called upon, whose you are, and whom you serve, "and him that confesseth me before men, I will confess before my Father which is in heaven."

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NOTE. — [29.] The *ὄξος* was the *posca*, the sour wine, the vinegar and water, the common drink of the Roman soldiers. [*ἑσώωπις*.] An aromatic plant growing on walls, common in the south of England, and on the continent, with blue or white flowers, and having stalks about one and a half foot long, which would in this case be long enough, — the feet of the crucified person not being ordinarily raised above that distance from the ground. It was much used for sprinkling, Exod. xii. 22; Levit. xiv. 4; Ps. li. 7. — *Alford*.

## CHAPTER XX.

NOT FICTION. — WOMAN. — INCREDULITY OF RESURRECTION. — THE LINEN CLOTHES IN THE SEPULCHRE. — MARY AT THE SEPULCHRE. — EAR CORRECTIVE OF EYE. — MARY HOLDING JESUS. — HIS WORD. — IDENTITY OF CHRIST'S BODY. — RECOGNITION. — INVESTITURE OF APOSTLES. — ABSOLUTION. — THE LEPROSY. — SCEPTICISM OF THOMAS.

CAN a single reader of the beautiful narrative in this chapter, for one moment hesitate to believe that it is a picture of a reality? Can any one suppose for a moment this record to be fiction? Does not every touch in it indicate the presence of an original? and the very artlessness of the story, and the incredulity of them that have attested the great truth that is here stated, proves only the more that this is the description of fact, and not a novel, a romance, or a chapter or episode to interest, amuse, and strike. On the first day of the week, it appears, a woman last at the cross, as we saw in the previous chapter, a weeper at the sufferings of the Man of Sorrows, is first at the resurrection with the earliest dawn, and sees what startles her, because she did not anticipate his resurrection from the dead, — the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. The moment that she saw this, suspecting that the Scribes and Pharisees had taken away the body of him whom she loved, she ran to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved — that is, John the writer of the Gospel, — “and saith unto them, they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.” She did not believe he would rise; and the testimony of others that they saw



him after he was risen, is the less impeachable, because of the previous incredulity with which they received the tidings that he would actually rise. We then read that "Peter went forth, and that other disciple," that is, John — Peter, then an old man, and John, a young man; and how true to nature! "they ran both together, and the other disciple," the young man, "did outrun Peter," the old man, "and came first to the sepulchre." But youth shows first its timidity. John stooped down and looked in, and saw the linen clothes lying; he was afraid, and therefore went not in. But Peter, with all the boldness but yet the precipitancy that was his peculiar characteristic, went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen clothes lying. And then it is stated very minutely, "And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself."

But why record this very minute and trifling incident? The answer is, It is very important. The fact that the linen clothes in which the body of the Lord of Glory was wrapped, were thus carefully rolled up and laid aside, is one of the triumphant proofs that there was no precipitancy in the resurrection; that the charge of the Pharisees was unfounded, that his disciples came and stole the body by night; for if they had done so, and amidst the Roman guard, every thing would have been left in confusion, instead of being arranged just as if the arrangement had been meant to last for ever. The little incident, therefore, apparently accidental, is one of the most striking proofs of the reality of the account of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. When these disciples went to their own home, "Mary," still incredulous, "stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." What was their shape, what was their appearance, there is no record;

simply there appeared two celestial visitants clothed in white robes, bearing the impress of the skies. As they aided him in his agony, aided him in his trials, so now they came to attest his resurrection from the dead, and to be the first preachers of that glorious fact, "Jesus is risen from the dead. Come and see the place where he lay." They asked her therefore, "Woman, why weepest thou?" Her answer was, "Because they have taken away my Lord," — the language of human affection, not of divine attachment. And when she had thus said, she turned herself, and saw Jesus, but did not recognize him as the Lord of Glory.

It has been tried to be proved by some that here is evidence that the senses were deceived when looking upon the risen Christ; and why, they argue, may the senses not be deceived when they look upon a Roman Catholic altar and see the bread, and not, as the Roman Catholic priest believes, the flesh and blood of the Son of God? The answer is very obvious. When the mind is intensely occupied with one thought, it is remarkable that the clock may strike, or a tune may be played within a few yards of your presence, — you will neither hear the clock strike, nor recollect that the tune was played. An absorbing thought seems to lock up all the senses, and render them impervious to impressions which would otherwise strike with lasting and remarkable effect. So Mary here was so thinking of the grave, and the dead One that had lain in it, and of the catastrophe that had happened by his body being removed and carried away, that she took no notice, no special, no minute notice of the stranger that addressed her, and knew not therefore that it was Jesus. But you will notice that the moment that Jesus said to her, "Mary," that moment she turned herself, and said to him, "Rabboni, which is to say, Master." Thus the hearing corrected the seeing, and the well-known musical tones of that voice that had proclaimed so often on the streets of Palestine, and that had spoken from the cross so emphati-

cally, the words of everlasting life, came back upon her hearing like sweet music, and she remembered him, and turned round instantly and said, "My Lord and my Master." "Jesus then saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." It is evident that when she recognized him by her ear, having failed to recognize him by her eye, she wished to hold him fast, lest he should be removed and taken away from her. And when she did so, he said, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

Many different interpretations have been given of this. There is one, I think, abundantly obvious. "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended." She evidently thought that he had fulfilled his promise: "I go; and again I will come unto you, that where I am, there ye may be also." She thought that this was his second advent, that he that left them sorrowing orphans, had returned to them according to his promise, to take the throne, to sway the sceptre, and to reign for ever. Now Jesus corrects this. He says, "Do not hold me as if I were to be a ceaseless presence, for did I not tell you that I should first ascend to the Father, send down the Holy Spirit to comfort you, and be with you; and that then after that, I would come to you again, that where I am there you may be also; therefore touch me not, hold me not, for I am not yet ascended; and this, therefore, cannot be my second advent. But go rather and preach the glad news that, according to my promise, I am now about to ascend unto my Father, and therefore your Father; unto my God, and therefore your God."

We then read that "Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the

disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord." How remarkable that Jesus, after he rose from the grave, retained on his hands and on his side the marks of the nails and the spear that pierced them. It has been asked, does he retain the marks and memorials of the cross amid the realms of glory? Probably not. His body previous to his ascension retained all the traces that it had previous to his death; but in all probability when that body arose in the cloud, and became glorified, those traces were effaced, and ceased to be visible memorials of the agony through which he had passed. Hence some have thought that during the millennial reign of Christians upon earth, our bodies shall be like our Lord's body between his resurrection and ascension, when he mixed with the disciples, retained the marks of the crucifixion, ate of an honey-comb and a piece of a broiled fish; and that our bodies after the millennial reign, when the whole shall be restored, and heaven and earth shall be one, will then be made like to his glorified body; all the marks and traces of imperfection being expunged, and clad no longer in the clinging garments of the grave, but in the shining robes of immortality and glory. At all events, what we gather from this is, that the same body that was laid in the grave, a stone being rolled over the mouth of that grave and carefully sealed, was the very same body that rose again from the dead; and thus and thereby the identity of Christ's body in his resurrection was clearly and irrefragably established. And just as his body rose from the grasp of death and ascended into heaven, so when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be changed, these very bodies of ours shall be raised incorruptible. We shall not be clad with other bodies — that would not be a resurrection, but a second creation — but we shall rise;

the same bodies that were laid in the dust, that have mingled with the grass, that have been devoured, it may be, by the beasts of the field, that have mixed with the atoms of rocks, and been washed by many waters to the unsounded sea; when the Great Creator of all shall speak, particle shall come to particle, dust to dust, and we shall recognize each other, not as distinctly, but more distinctly, in the light of the resurrection morn, than we recognize and distinguish each other now. I never can believe that the saved in glory will not distinctly recognize each other. I never will believe that the images of the beloved dead, that we cherish in our memories as in a picture gallery, will ever be effaced except by the presence of the originals themselves. And when these shall meet and mingle together, and recount all the trials, the struggles, and the troubles of the way, what a glorious gathering! What a blessed group! No wonder that angels ask, "Who are these, and whence came they?" Immigrants, not natives; colonists, not born there. "These are they that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore are they before the throne."

When Jesus appeared in the midst of his disciples, and showed his identity, he gave them a commission, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" that is, I believe, the special function of the Holy Ghost herein indicated. "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Now first, to whom was this addressed? and secondly, what does it mean? Were these words addressed to the apostles? Just read the passage, and you will find that all the disciples were assembled. It was the first day of the week; Mary Magdalene was there. It was not the apostles only that were met, but the apostles and disciples also. If, therefore, it be a judicial power to forgive sin, as the Council of Trent says, it was a prerogative conferred not upon

the apostles only, but upon all the disciples, on all the men and women that were then and there met and assembled together; and therefore would fail to prove the special prerogative for which it is quoted. The same prerogative is bestowed on all. Pastors and people are in this equally invested with the function, and may therefore equally exercise it.

But, in the next place, if it be an apostolical power, transmitted by apostolical delegation to the apostles' successors in every age, then you will notice that one apostle was not present, and that therefore only eleven, or rather ten, were thus invested, and one, Thomas, was wanting. Well now, what successor of the apostles — such assuming himself to be — can prove to me that his succession is not that of Thomas? and if his succession be from Thomas, then he never got the prerogative of remitting and retaining sins, because Thomas was never invested with it. No man can be absolutely certain that his succession is from the ten that were met together, and not from Thomas, who never is reckoned to have received the gift that was here bestowed upon those that were assembled upon this occasion.

But, in the third place, what is meant by the prerogative? Does it really mean that every minister of the Gospel has only to pronounce absolution, and the man on whom he pronounces it is forgiven? A Roman Catholic priest says so, and he makes the thing very reasonable in its way; but for a Protestant minister to say so, is to mismanage and bungle it altogether; because, when the priest absolves, he makes the party to be absolved disclose the interior contents of his mind, his conscience, his memory, his heart; and when he has done so, then he pronounces absolution. But for a Protestant minister to attempt to pronounce absolution without the previous rite of a thorough confession, is absurd and unreasonable; and therefore those that demand and insist upon having the prerogative of absolving, must insist upon the people entering upon the degrading and debasing practice

of confessing their sins to the priest or minister. But let us inquire what is the precise meaning of the words. Does it mean a judicial or declarative absolution? Now I think the explanation of it is perfectly plain. In Leviticus we read the story of the leper. He was to be brought to the priest; then, it is in our translation, "The priest shall see certain marks upon the leper, and he shall pronounce him clean. But if he see certain other marks, the priest shall pronounce him unclean." In the original Hebrew it is, literally translated, "the priest shall cleanse him," and "the priest shall uncleanse him." But to uncleanse and to cleanse is absurd. Besides, the leprosy was the disease over which the priest had no power; it was an incurable disease, except by divine power, and all that the priest could do was to watch the symptoms, and pronounce clean or pronounce unclean, as the symptoms might indicate. But in the original Hebrew it is "cleanse" and "uncleanse," therefore the verb is used absolutely when its sense is only relative; it seems judicial, when its meaning is truly declarative; and our translators have therefore properly and justly translated it "pronounce clean" and "pronounce unclean."

Now John was a Hebrew, and Hebraisms run through all the writings of John; in the Apocalypse they are very frequent, in his Epistles they are also frequent. And if our translators had translated the Greek according to the same principle on which they have translated the Hebrew, they would have rendered this verse thus: "Whose soever sins ye pronounce remitted, they are remitted, and whose soever sins ye pronounce retained, they are retained." But how pronounce? Upon evidence given in. If the party shows no signs of repentance, then to say that his sins are remitted, is to state what is untrue. If the party shows repentance, it does not need a priest to pronounce absolution; a Scripture reader can do so. His repentance is either a fact, or it is not a fact. If it be a fact, the wide world may proclaim

it; if it be not a fact, nobody has any business to proclaim it at all. Therefore the simple meaning is, "Wherever you see the evidence of real conversion, of true faith, then you may say, on the strength of this evidence, Your sins are forgiven; but where there is no such evidence, you have no right to say so, whether you be priest, or prelate, or presbyter. It is not your function, nor is it your duty to say so."

But the best and most conclusive evidence is perhaps this — the Acts of the Apostles is a short chapter of inspired ecclesiastical history; and that book was written to show how the apostles carried into practice the prerogatives with which they were invested. There we read, a heathen jailer is suddenly converted. He comes to Paul and Silas, and says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" If Paul and Silas had been Romish priests, they would have said, "Kneel down and confess your sins to us, and after you have done so, we will, if we think proper and right, give you, after a short penance, absolution and remission of sins." If they had been inspired with that judicial power, they would have done so. But what did they do? They answered instantly, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In other words, they preached remission of sins through preaching Christ; and told the jailer of Philippi that faith in him was salvation; and thus they carried into practical development the prerogative with which they were invested, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Thomas, who was absent when Jesus appeared, was very sceptical when told of it, and said that he would not believe except he should see. Jesus condescended to his incredulity, and Thomas beheld his hands and his side, and believed; and then he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." In the Socinian version of the New Testament there is a



note upon this. Some of the Socinian and Roman Catholic notes on the New Testament are contradictory not only one with the other, but each with itself; one of the Unitarian notes says that "My Lord and my God," was a rash exclamation of Thomas; that he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Now you see how hard men are put to it when they want to get rid of the plain and obvious meaning of the passage. If it had been as they interpret, it would have been, "And Thomas exclaimed, My Lord and my God!" But, mark you, the words are, "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." So that if the Unitarian annotator had looked at the passage, he would have seen it is not an exclamation, not a profane oath, but that it is addressed to Jesus, and him he calls "My Lord and my God;" in other words, he recognized him as God. Did Jesus repel this? No, he accepts it at once. He said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

What an interesting episode in the life of Jesus! What a striking chapter is this! How startling is it as in the age in which it is written! Nothing was heard like it, nothing approaching it. Can you suppose that the rude fishermen and publicans of Jerusalem and Galilee composed this out of their own heads? Can you suppose it an invention of theirs? The infidel, who believes that John invented this history out of his own imagination, believes in a far more stupendous miracle, because a stupendous impossibility, than he does who believes that these are facts, and that John recorded them as inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

## CHAPTER XX. 30, 31.

RECORD OF WHAT JESUS DID. — PRETENDED HISTORIES WRITTEN  
— TRADITION. — FAITH. — PEOPLE HAVE A RIGHT TO THE BIBLE  
— BIBLE INTELLIGIBLE. — SUFFICIENT. — PRACTICAL LIFE. —  
CHRIST THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE.

WE are told by the Evangelist, that “Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book ; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”

Then plainly signs and wonders were performed by the Lord of Glory, during his pilgrimage upon earth, which have not been registered by the sacred penmen in this or in any other of the Gospels. All that Jesus did essential or useful to the salvation and edification of his own, is here ; but what was merely of temporary value, or what was thought by the Source of all light and wisdom not to be necessary for the edifying of his people in after ages, we are informed in the words of the sacred Evangelist, have not been entered in this book. The same wisdom that inspired the record of the signs that are here, has forbidden the record of the signs that are not here. And one can see, in fact, some reason for it. If all that Jesus did and said in the course of his ministry of three years upon earth had been recorded, instead of the Four Gospels being so short as they are, they would have formed a heavy, unmanageable, impracticable mass ; and the complaints of those who object to the Bible because it is now so large, would have had something like a shadow of

reason if that volume had been swelled to six or eight times its present size. One can see, therefore, some shadow of reason for the omission of many of the signs that Jesus did, while one is comforted with the blessed assurance that all that we need to know, all that it was good for us to know, all that could contribute to our comfort, have been written and recorded.

In all books external to this book we have no authentic record of any of the signs and miracles that Jesus did. Certain records have been made up that allege to be the registers of signs and miracles that Jesus did; in the first four centuries of the Christian era, especially in the fourth, several Gospels, so called, made their appearance. There is "The Gospel of Nicodemus," "The Gospel of the Infancy," as it has been called; but it needs but the most ordinary critical acumen to see that they contain allusions to facts and phenomena that belong to the third century, and that their style and manner of expression all demonstrate that they were written at the time we prove them to have been written, 300 years after the events recorded in these chapters actually took place. And secondly, the contrast between the signs and miracles recorded in the Gospels, and the puerile, and absurd, and anile signs and miracles recorded in the Apocryphal Gospels, is such a contrast as only exists between fable and fact, between night and day, between the ravings of fanaticism and the sober words of honesty and of truth. You must not go away with the notion that there ever was real difficulty in settling what is the Gospel and what is not. Facts are demonstrative that these documents were written four centuries afterwards, by men that were not inspired, and indeed scarcely pretended to be so; and the evidence is just as conclusive that these four Gospels were written during or immediately after the events by men that were eye-witnesses of all the facts and phenomena which they record, and they are accordingly the Word of God, the inspired revelation of his holy and his blessed will.

The Evangelist says, "These things are *written*." The word "Scripture," so frequent on our lips, is just the word for writings; and the fact that the Evangelist here declares these things to be written, is evidence disproving what the Romanist alleges, that no command was given to the apostles to write the Bible. We own that in the Gospels there is no command, "write," though there is in the Apocalypse; but if the evangelists were inspired men, which the Romanist will admit, and if the evangelists say they wrote these things, then either they did what they were bidden, or they did what they were forbidden. If they did what they were forbidden, then they acted contrary to their instructions, and inconsistently with their professions; but if they have written, then the fact that they wrote, and record that they did so, is proof that they were commanded, and commissioned, and inspired to write; and therefore the allegation that the apostles were not commanded to write, and that the Bible is to be classified with other traditions, falls to the ground the moment that we read such a passage as this,—"These things are written." And we thank God and bless his name that they are written. The fixity of writing is most precious; the precariousness of oral tradition is almost proverbial. In the antediluvian world they had nothing but oral transmission or tradition, and under the influence of it, the whole earth corrupted its way; and when there were but three links between Adam, the first, Methuselah, the second, and Noah, the third — when three persons spanned the antediluvian age — yet, with only these three links in the chain of tradition, they lost the knowledge of God, and all flesh corrupted its way. We do not want to repeat the experiment; it has been made; it has been a signal failure.

Now God has left us — not tradition, which may be distorted, and always necessitates so many things for its perfection that the elements of a pure tradition never existed upon earth: it implies a faithful memory, faithful teaching, and

no bias in the heart, no taint in the nature ; it implies such pure vessels to transmit the pure contents from vessel to vessel as are only to be found in heaven, where tradition is not necessary. But, to save all the risks incidental to such transmission, we read, "These things are written." The comments vary like the clouds in the sky ; the written texts remain bright and luminous like the stars beyond them for ever and ever. The comments vary like the mists upon the mountain top ; but the comment and the mists are dissolved together, and the fixture of the Bible remains an everlasting stereotype, reasoning in its own majestic and impressive tones, incapable of being repressed or suppressed, of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come.

That faith which is here mentioned as so essential to our salvation, is not a blind belief of mere assertion, but the product of thorough evidence and investigation. What does John assert here ? "These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ." That is, that in the exercise of judgment, collecting, comparing, investigating the facts and phenomena here recorded, you may build your conclusion that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The pope asks you to give up your reason, that he may infallibly teach you ; an inspired evangelist bids you exercise your reason, that you may be savingly instructed. If the one be right, the other must be utterly and entirely wrong. Faith is not implicit or blind submission to ecclesiastical authority, or to the Church ; it is the result of the exercise of investigation in the written word. He does not say, "These things are written that ye may believe in the Church ;" but, "These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

The faith of the Protestant Christian is an enlightened faith. It is not what the Romanist would call it, — rationalism ; it is not what the infidel would call it, — blind, im-

PLICIT, and unquestioning credence ; but the result of conclusions firmly believed, because rested on the surest and the strongest foundation ; whereas the creed again of the Romanist is a blind and implicit reception of a testimony, not upon the authority of the Evangelist, not as the result of investigation, but of confidence in the Church, or the priest, or whatever be the authority that occupies that place in his creed.

This process, that every man is to read the Bible, and on the facts recorded in the Bible to conclude that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is evidence indirectly that the people must have the Bible in their own hands. How can you read what is written, in order to believe that Jesus is the Christ, if the Bible is to be locked up and kept out of your hands ? Does not this statement imply that without the Bible, the written book in your hands, you cannot come to the conclusion that Jesus is the Christ ? This is no disparagement of the preached word ; it is only the vindication of the written word. And when the preacher takes the written word, and proclaims what is there, his testimony, in proportion as it is pure and true, is only the multiplied echo of the grand original. But here it is obviously implied that the people are to have the written book, in order that the people may comprehend what is not a sacerdotal, nor an ecclesiastical, but a saving thing, — that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

The Bible must be an intelligible book ; because, if these things be written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and if this implies that you must have the book, it involves a step further ; the book must be capable of being understood. And how could it be otherwise ? Shall councils be able to write canons that the people can understand ; and shall the God of heaven address letters to his creatures upon earth, so imperfect that they cannot understand them ? Is it not the fact that every epistle in the New Testament,

except three, was addressed to the laity, and not to the clergy or the ministers of the Gospel as such? And is it not fact, that the apostle himself says to a people that he was teaching, "If we" — an apostle — "or an angel from heaven preach to you any other gospel than that which ye have received, let him be anathema?" What does this imply? That the people had a standard to which they could refer, and that standard was an intelligible book; for to have it, and not to be able to comprehend it, would be equivalent to not having it at all.

This book that the people may have, and can understand, is sufficient to convince you "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that believing ye may have life through his name." "These things are written that ye might believe, and that believing ye might have life." Does not this prove that the Bible is sufficient to make wise unto salvation? but do you say, the passage applies only to this Gospel? I at once concede it. But what follows? If this Gospel alone is sufficient to make you wise unto everlasting life, then *à fortiori* the four Gospels and the whole New Testament together, must be sufficient to make you wise unto everlasting life. But does every Protestant then who has the Bible believe on Jesus, and believing, have life through his name? I say at once, No. But whose fault is it? Not the insufficiency of the book, but something wrong or improper in the reader of the book. And what we need in order to have all right, is not an addition to the Bible, but a change of the heart of the reader of the Bible; the removal of the prejudices from his mind. For the great defect is not in the book, but in the reader of the book. If a man be blind, what would be the use of doubling the intensity of the noonday sun? He would see no better. And if the fault be not in the book, but in the blind understanding of the reader of it, what we ask the Holy Spirit to do, is not to make the Bible

plainer or larger, but, "Open thou mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see wonderful things out of thy law."

We admit — both the Romanist and we admit — that the Bible is not always efficient; but we allege it is always sufficient. The Romanist, believing that the Bible is not always efficient, adds tradition and the opinion of the Church; we, believing that the Bible is not always efficient, pray for the Holy Spirit to enlighten the minds and open the eyes of the readers of the book. Hence the Romanist disparages God's book, by adding man's tradition to it in order to make it perfect; the Protestant glorifies God, and exalts his book, and owns the fault is in the reader, and prays that God the Spirit would open the eyes of him that reads, that he may understand it.

We have evidence in the book itself that the truths it contains have been able to lead to everlasting life. The Ethiopian ruler riding in his chariot and reading Isaiah, asked explanation, which is reasonable enough. Because we allege the sufficiency of the Bible, we do not deny the necessity of the teacher, the preacher, and the commentator. Because we vindicate God's book from the aspersions of man, we do not throw down and trample on another ordinance of God, which is equally an ordinance as well as the inspiration of the Bible. When this Ethiopian ruler read Isaiah, the moment that he saw it referred to Christ, that moment he believed and was baptized. The Bereans, it is said very remarkably in the Acts, when an Apostle preached, searched the Scriptures, whether these things were so. And it is added, therefore, on that account, many of them believed. "It is written," repelled the Tempter in the case of our blessed Lord. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," was his frequent charge. And I have often thought that the most impressive credential of this most precious book is the fact that Jesus, its Author, its Subject, its Object, its all and in all, whenever he solved a difficulty, replied to a question,



answered an objection, did not do so from the depths of his own wisdom, but always out of the written book. Can you conjecture a nobler honor put upon the book than that the Author of the book should constantly quote it as the best exponent of his own deep and blessed mind?

We learn from this passage that the Scriptures have all been written for practical purposes. "These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ." If the other things had been written, curiosity would have been tickled, the fancy would have been pleased, salvation might not have been promoted. But these that are in the book are written for this great practical end, "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing have life through his name." Of all books upon earth the Bible is the most practical. Search it; you will find nothing in it to please an idle fancy, nothing to gratify an itching curiosity. Oh, how many questions do we ask as we read it! When Lazarus came back from the spirit land, and mingled with the sisterhood that wept over his departure, how naturally do we say, "I wonder he said nothing about what he felt on dying — I wonder he said nothing about what he saw in that land from which no traveller returns — I wonder that he said nothing of the bright company, and the holy and happy family that were there." All is silence. Why? It would have pleased our fancy, it would not have profited our souls. Take another instance. "Lord, are there many that be saved?" What an interesting question! We sometimes wonder, will the majority of the human race be saved, or a minority? But when the question was asked of Jesus, what was his answer? "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." And again, "Lord, what shall this man do?" what was his answer? "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." What rich, practical — and not the less so that it is inspired — common sense is found in this blessed book! Every thing

is in it to make man wiser, holier, happier; nothing in it to gratify an idle, itching, and prurient curiosity.

The practical conclusion is, that "Jesus is the Christ;" that is, the Messiah that saves his people from their sins — for that is the meaning of the word — Jesus the Anointed One, appointed of old, and consecrated of God to be what he is called and actually is, the Saviour of the people. Read the sketch of the original in Isaiah; read the fulfilment of that sketch in the Gospel of St. John; and you will see that both copied from an original; the one from an original in the future, the other from the same original in the present: but that both Isaiah and John preached and testified to the one Saviour, Jesus Christ.

And lastly, "that believing this, ye may have life through his name." What does that imply? That we have not life. Yes, we have animal life, the same as the eagle, the ox, and the fish of the sea. We have intellectual life, and can write beautiful poems, able histories, and make magnificent and conclusive speeches; but there is a life beyond all this; a life that is happiness, and holiness, and joy, and peace; and that life we have not by nature, and must have by grace, if ever we are destined to be happy. The solemn assertion of inspiration is, that "Ye are dead in trespasses and in sins." The awful complaint of our blessed Lord was, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." And that life is to be found — where? In Christ. And this is the great truth we are all so prone to forget. One thinks religion is a church thing, another a sacerdotal thing; another thinks that it is a corporate thing, another a sacramental thing. The Bible constantly declares it is not form, — it is not subscription to a creed, — it is not the pronouncing of a Shibboleth, — it is not association with a party; it is life. And just as the dead body that touched the bones of the ancient prophet received life, so the soul brought into contact, not with the

Church, but with the Lord of the Church, instantly becomes instinct with life, and stands upon its feet a living, a responsible, a hopeful, and a happy thing.

This life is said to be also "in his name," — "that ye may have life through his name." His atonement opened up the way to it; his intercession keeps the way open. As a Priest, he made it possible that we can have life; as a King he makes that life an actual gift. On his cross he purchased it; on his throne he bestows it. "And this is life eternal, to know thee, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." What a solemn thought is that! Are we Christians? that is, have we life?

Christ, according to the assertion of the Evangelist, is the object of all Scripture testimony. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Every part of Scripture, as well as this Gospel, is full of Christ. It is all inlaid with Christ. He is the key-note of all its harmony; he is the woof and warp of all its texture; he is the beauty and glory of all its composition: and he that finds beautiful imagery, fine poetry, profound reasoning in the Bible, but misses Christ the Saviour, has never been taught by the Spirit of God to read that Bible as he should. The historic part is full of Christ: every chapter reflects his character, and every stage in his history is a step in his descent to save. The prophetic part is full of Christ: Moses proclaimed him; Isaiah predicted his advent; David sketched his royalty; Isaiah enumerated his sufferings; Micah states his birthplace, and the Apostles his glory. The promissory part is full of Christ: all the promises are Yea and Amen in him. The ceremonial part is all exhausted in his advent. The doctrinal part is full of Christ: he is the root; doctrines are but the leaves, the branches, or the fruit. The practical part is full of Christ; for every thing must be done in his name, for his glory, in his

strength. The whole Bible, therefore, preaches Christ : the Old and New Testaments, like the overshadowing cherubim, touch each other with the tips of their wings while both look down upon the glory that burns between ; the two Testaments, like the twin lips of an oracle, equally say, " Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world."

Thank God for this blessed book. Thank God that this one Gospel is sufficient to save. Thank him that he has given us so much to make us wise unto salvation. Pray that he that inspired it would inspire your hearts to read it. Go to rest with a sense of your responsibility : if you miss everlasting life, it is not because God stands in your way ; it is not because a decree obstructs you ; it is not because the Bible is insufficient ; it is because some other passion absorbs your thoughts, some other pursuit occupies your attention. You are neglecting the great salvation ; or going one to his farm, another to his merchandise, another to his home ; and none accepting the invitation that is as freely given as it is heartily welcome to you all.

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NOTE. — [23.] These words reach forward, however, beyond, and extend the grant which they reassure to all ages of the Church. The words closely considered, amount to this, — that with the gift and real participation of the Holy Spirit, comes the conviction, and therefore the knowledge, of sin, of righteousness, of judgment ; and this knowledge becomes more perfect, the more men are filled with the Holy Ghost. Since this is so, they who are preëminently filled with his presence, are preëminently gifted with the discernment of sin, and repentance of others, and hence by the Lord's appointment authorized to appoint pardon of sin and the contrary. The Apostles had this in an especial manner, and by the full indwelling of the Spirit were enabled to discern the hearts of men, and to give sentence on that discernment. (See Acts v. 1-11 ; viii. 21 ; xiii. 9.) And this gift belongs especially to those who by legitimate appointment are set

to minister in the Churches of Christ ; not by successive delegation from the Apostles, — of which I find in the New Testament no trace, — but by their mission from Christ, the bestower of the Spirit, for their office, when orderly and legitimately conferred upon them by the Churches. Not however to them exclusively — though for decency and order it is expedient that the outward and formal declaration should be so — but in proportion as any disciple shall have been filled with the Holy Spirit of wisdom is the inner discernment, the κρίσις his — κρατεῖν here corresponds to δέειν in Matt. — see the distinction there ; — ὑφίεναι to λύειν. — *Alford.*

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE ASCENSION. — THE RESURRECTION. — WORLDLY EMPLOYMENT.  
— APPEARANCE OF JESUS. — DISCIPLES AT FIRST FAIL TO RECOGNIZE HIM. — THE REASON. — IDIOSYNCRACIES. — PRESENCE OF CHRIST. — QUESTION TO PETER. — PETER'S PRIMACY AND GRIEF. — THINGS SPOKEN BY JESUS.

IF we did not possess the rest of the Gospels, namely, those according to Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, we should be without a positive historical record of the ascension of our blessed Lord to the right hand of the Father, and his session there, a Prince and an Intercessor on our behalf. It seems that John's Gospel was written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, rather as supplemental to the rest, than to repeat the same historic facts that they had already embodied. You will notice in John's Gospel how much of the conversation of our Lord is given, and how few of the personal and historic facts of his most remarkable biography. Matthew, and Mark, and Luke seem to dwell upon what we may call the outer life of Jesus; John seems to dwell entirely upon what may be called the inner life; as if he that leant oftenest on his bosom, had drunk the deepest into his spirit, and seen clearest and been taught most of the thoughts, the sympathies, the sorrows, the joys and lofty communings of him who spake as never man spake, and lived as never man lived.

But there are some incidental touches in the Gospel of St. John that assume the fact of the Ascension without asserting it; and these latent allusions are sometimes the most striking, always the most interesting, and not the least de-

monstrative of the truths to which they refer. For instance, he says in the previous chapter, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; unto my God, and your God." And in a chapter before that, he says, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascending to where he was before?" The allusion to the ascension is continuous. The fact of his ascent is not stated in the sequel of the Gospel; but these latent or incidental allusions show that John perfectly understood it as a fact; but for reasons conclusive and satisfactory to him, superintended as he was by the Holy Spirit, he did not record that fact.

Now, this chapter has been regarded as supplemental to a Gospel that may be called in itself supplemental. Its object is evidently to prove the reality of Christ's resurrection, to give irresistible proofs that he had risen, that there might be no dispute or doubt, or difference of belief that Christ had risen from the dead, and had become the first-fruits of them that slept. Because it was just as important to give satisfactory proof of Christ's resurrection, as it was to give conclusive proof of Christ's death. If there was proof that he died, and therefore an atonement for our sins, but no proof that he rose from the dead, we should not see that the atonement was accepted, we should not be satisfied that that atonement was efficacious as it should be; and the most vital and precious truth in Christianity would be left without the support and evidence that so important a truth demands.

Now, this chapter is full of proofs that Christ is risen from the dead; and accordingly we read, "he showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias;" and he did it in this way. The disciples were busy at their trade; and this is a very instructive lesson. They had witnessed the atonement, they had also witnessed the resurrection; and yet they did not become fanatical, they did not become monks, ascetics, or recluses. But even after the solemn scenes of

Calvary, the grave, Gethsemane and the garden of Arimathea, they went forth and attended to their ordinary duties and business in the world. And so should it be with us. Christianity is not to be a substitute for our duties to Cæsar, but to be the inspiration and consecration of them all. Christianity is made and meant to help us in this world as well as to fit us for another world. And the man that makes religion a pretence for neglecting his duty to his country, his duty to his sovereign, or his duty to his master, either plays the hypocrite to us, or deceives himself. The Gospel does not bid us lay aside the fisherman's net or the husbandman's plough; but it bids us fulfil all relative and all social duties with all our heart, as in the sight of God, not eye-servants, but serving the Lord Christ. It is wonderful the common sense, as I have often said, that is in this book; and it is a perfect contrast to the fanaticism of some, the asceticism of others, and the folly of many.

While these men were thus engaged in their lawful and their daily avocation, Jesus manifested himself to them. That alone was the consecration of their trade. You will find that bright thoughts, and holy thoughts, and blessed thoughts will leap from the hearts of men that are busy doing their duty; while only sinful thoughts and wicked thoughts will stir in the hearts of men that are standing with idle hands, and making religion a pretence for neglecting their duties to mankind. Hence Jesus appears to these fishermen spreading their nets; and asks them, "Children, have ye any meat?" And so far from repressing their attention to this world's duties, he encouraged them, and bade them spread their net upon another side of the ship.

They were first perplexed; they did not know it was the Lord. Now, it will not do for our Roman Catholic friends to say, this proves transubstantiation. This is one of their texts. They say, "Here is evidence that the eye saw Christ, and did not know him." Therefore, they say, "the



eye sees upon the altar a piece of flour and water, a piece of bread; and yet it may be Christ's body, though the eyes do not see him." But then, to quote such proof as this seems eminently absurd. These fishermen were so absorbed in their occupation that they did not look very intently, they did not see very clearly. And you know when the mind is deeply absorbed by a subject, that the senses do not properly or instantly act. I have sat studying; the clock has struck wrong, and right, and over again, and I have never heard it. I have met in the street people I know, and I have looked on their countenances; but I was thinking of something else, and I failed to recognize them. Nothing is more natural, nothing more common. The body is simply the machinery; and if the mind is busy with thought within, the machinery does not act as it ordinarily does. And these fishermen were men toiling to support their families; they were so busy, properly busy, in spreading their nets, and trying to earn bread for their wives and children, that when the Lord came, they did not recognize him. But when he spoke, and said, "Children, have ye any meat?" and they answered, "No;" and he added, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Then that disciple whom Jesus loved" — that is, John; he always speaks of himself in that manner — "saith unto Peter, It is the Lord."

Then mark Peter, how his conduct contrasts itself with the calm self-possession of John: the idiosyncrasy of each apostle is most beautiful, and most sharply and clearly delineated. You cannot fail to detect it in every incident. The calmness, the deep, the solemn stillness of John's loving and affectionate heart — "It is the Lord." But Peter, rash, impetuous, hasty, and hot-tempered — not the worse perhaps for that — but very hot-tempered, "girt his fisher's coat about him, and cast himself into the sea." He had no pa-

tience to wait. The expression within a parenthesis ("for he was naked") does not mean what we should imply by these words. The original in the Greek, and also in the Hebrew, is, literally translated, "naked;" but means properly, "without the upper coat," the upper tunic, the eastern and ancient garment which was laid aside. And therefore he girt on his upper coat, and jumped into the sea, such was his ecstasy at the very thought of meeting the Lord. You see the temperaments of these two men. And these two temperaments are not always subdued by grace. One man is born with a hasty temper; another with a slow, and what makes it worse often, a sullen temper. Another man, again, is born with a very self-possessed temper. These are our constitutional peculiarities, they are given us in providence, we are not responsible for them, but for seeking grace to sanctify, to sweeten, to restrain and direct them. And very often we forget this. We see one man of a much more lovely character than another—so amiable, so kind, so gentle. We see another man hot-tempered, ready instantly to flash into a passion the moment that the spark is applied; and we say, the former is the lovely Christian character. But the latter may be much more so; the latter may have had a long inner struggle, and may have had a great deal to do to keep temper down; the other has no temper to keep down. Nature has made the one; grace is remaking the other; and the latter, that looks to us so unlovely, may be in the sight of God a far higher-toned Christian character than the other that seems so amiable.

When Peter thus leaped into the sea, we read that "the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits)." Now that seems a very useless expression; but what is its value to us? That this is the record of an actual eye-witness. Nobody but an eye-witness of the facts would have written this eighth verse. "And the other disciples came in a little ship;

(for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes." That is a picture from life, a statement of an eye-witness. You do not need striking external corroborative proof; you have only to read this to know that the writer was an eye-witness of the fact.

It is added, "Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord." That is real. Can you doubt that it is real? They were so awed, so overwhelmed, so struck dumb with that magnificent presence, that they dare not even ask him a question. "This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Not, I think, as some have very foolishly supposed it, more than these boats, and nets, and fishes; that would not be worth asking; but, Lovest thou me more than John, and Matthew, and the rest of the apostles love me? As if to say, "Peter, thou hast denied me more than these. Now, Peter, dost thou reinstate thyself by loving me more than these?" Peter then answered, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." How humble is this; how modest! As Peter grows in years, he grows in grace. Peter a short time before would have said, "Love thee more than these! Thou knowest that I love thee more than John, and more than Matthew; and that I am ready to lay down my life for thee." But he had learned by experience not to trust in himself; and therefore he leaves out the comparison, "more than these;" and says, "Thou knowest that I love thee; but more I dare not say, my Lord." "He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." Then Jesus repeats the question again, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" And Peter again answers, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee;" yet no comparison. And then Jesus saith, "Feed

my sheep." He then says the third time, "Lovest thou me?" Now there is a very singular change here. The first two verbs are in the Greek *φιλεῖν*, *to love*; but the third question, very singular, has *ἀγαπεῖν*, another word, *to love*. In the first two he asks, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Peter's constant reply is not in the same verb, but in another verb, "Thou knowest that I love thee."

Then Jesus leaves, in the third question, the verb that he had been using, and adopts the verb that Peter had used, and says, "Peter, lovest thou me more than these?" As much as to say, "Well, I will take your own word, which is more personal, and less wide — more human and less divine; and I ask thee now, Dost thou love me more than these?" It is said that "Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?" Why grieved? The grief was not that Jesus asked him so often, but it was that *third time*. He remembered the words, "Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." And when Peter heard the third time come in Christ's questioning love, all his past misconduct rushed into his mind. All sins that are forgiven are not always forgotten: nor are they unforgiven because they are not forgotten. And therefore, when he said the third time, "Lovest thou me?" all Peter's early recollections rushed in a full flood into his mind, and he was grieved that he said the third time, "Lovest thou me?"

Let me notice here, that it has been remarked by those who advocate what is called the supremacy of Peter, that here we have Peter constituted the Primate of Christendom. And they say, that he asked him three times, and three times he was answered; and three times he gave the order, "Feed, or shepherdize, my flock;" and they say it meant that Peter was constituted the chief bishop, or what we call in more familiar phraseology the pope of Christendom. But surely people must be ill off for arguments that make use of such an argument as this. One can see nothing there about pri-

macy ; we see, on the contrary, an allusion to Peter's first guilt ; and because he had sinned so greatly, a pointed and personal appeal to him to redeem the time, and make up by future love for his past criminal denial ; and Peter himself evidently thought so. But the chief reason for their giving the supremacy to Peter is, that our Lord's language is, "Feed my flock." But the very same apostle, who knew best whether he was made pope, writes in one of his epistles, the First Epistle of Peter, the fifth chapter, at the first verse, "The elders which are among you" — the Presbyters which are among you — "I exhort, who am also" — Your bishop? No. Your cardinal? No. Your archbishop, your pope? No ; but, "The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am also a presbyter" — *who am also a presbyter* — "and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God." The commission that he got, he transmits ; and if, "Feed the flock of God," constituted Peter the primate of Christendom, then his command to other copresbyters, "Feed the flock of God," constituted them the primates of Christendom. But this proves so much that it proves nothing to the purpose at all. Besides, if these three remarks, "Feed my flock," or, "Feed my sheep," had constituted Peter the primate of the episcopal college, how can you explain the extraordinary fact that Peter was grieved at it? Why, he would have been delighted. The tendency of human nature would have been to be puffed up. But we read that Peter was grieved at it. Does that look as if he was exalted above the rest? You do not find a man in the present day very much grieved when he is made a bishop, nor a bishop very much grieved when he is made an archbishop ; nor a cardinal very much grieved when he is made a pope. You do not find it so in modern days. Then they have lost the succession ; for we read here that Peter was grieved when, according to them, he was created the pri-

mate of the Church. But the fact is, Peter was created no such thing. He was grieved at his sins. And we are only amazed that people should so distort and pervert this beautiful passage as to construct an ecclesiastical despotism out of a simple commission to win souls to Christ, and feed them that are the flock of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The chapter closes with a very interesting statement, which has been open to mistake. "The world could not contain the books that should be written." This is plainly a proverbial expression. I do not think we are to construe it literally, as if the world could not contain them. And yet if all that one says, — if all that one man who has a very busy life has spoken, and, if he be a minister, preached, were to be printed, you have no idea of what volumes it would fill. If all we have said at our firesides, if all we have said in the House of Commons or in the House of Lords, if all that we have said in the shop, in the exchange, in the counting-house, or wherever we have been, were to be actually reported and copied verbatim, you have no idea of the volumes it would fill. And therefore the expression, "The whole world could not contain the books that should be written," means simply it would occupy a vast space. I distinguish, If all that we had spoken during a life of thirty-three years were to be embodied, it would be in volumes tolerably portable. But recollect, they had no printing in those days. The whole Bible in manuscript would then occupy a very large cart to convey it from one place to another. Recollect that the whole of this book only as a manuscript would occupy a large space. And if all that one has spoken in a lifetime were to be written on vellum or parchment, and on one side only, I would venture to say that the manuscript would extend from John o' Groats to the Land's End, at least would cover a great many acres of land if it were to be spread out. But I do not attach this severe meaning to it. I regard the expression as purely proverbial; the use of a

picture that was familiar to mankind, to illustrate the simple truth that if all that Christ said were written, it would be inconvenient. But we rejoice to know, what is stated in the previous chapter, "These are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and that believing ye may have life through his name."

## CHAPTER XXI. 21-23.

PETER'S QUERY. — OUR TRANSLATION. — OUR CURIOSITY ABOUT OTHERS. — PRACTICAL ANSWERS. — LIFE A JOURNEY. — CHRIST'S SECOND ADVENT. — DUTY BEFORE CURIOUS QUESTIONS.

A VERY instructive and interesting scene occurs at the close of this chapter ; so suggestive, that we venture to add an exposition of its lessons.

“ Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do ? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die : yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die ; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? ”

In the course of the chapter, Peter receives from his Lord the prophecy of his own approaching erucifixion. He was told that when he was young he girded himself ; but that when he should be old, another should gird him, and should carry him whither he would not ; in other words, that thus he should die. It is written accordingly in the pages of the most credible ancient historians, — among the rest, in the second book of Eusebius, — that Peter was erucified with his head downwards ; and that the prophecy of our Lord was thus literally and truly fulfilled. Peter seeing John, and having just heard the prophecy respecting the nearness and nature of his own death, turns round with his accustomed precipitancy, and saith unto Jesus, “ Lord, and what shall this man do ? ” There is here an instance, I think,



of the inaccuracy of our almost always accurate translators ; I will not call it inaccuracy, but misconception of the thoughts, because they have sufficiently marked, by the use of italics, where the translation varies from the original : the words *shall* and *do* are not in the original. On looking at any of the ordinary Bibles, you will see in the question, "What shall this man do?" that the word *do* is in italics ; and that is proof, according to a law observed by the translators, that the word is not in the original.

Now, what Peter had heard, you perceive, was that he himself should die ; and the question naturally suggested in his mind was not, "What shall John do?" but, "What shall be the nature, the date, and the place of the death of John?" He was told that he himself should die ; and seeing John following, he asks, "As I am, Lord, to die by the painful death of crucifixion, here is thy beloved disciple now following thee, tell me what is to be the nature and nearness of his death. Since I am to be girded in a way that I would not, and thou hast told me what shall be the issue of my course upon earth, what have you got to say about this man, about his death? Let me know something to gratify a curiosity I cannot repress : what is to be the end, what is to be the nature of the death of this disciple whom thou lovest?" This question was a very natural one, but it was a question of that sort that an answer to it could not contribute in the least degree to the edification of Peter or to the comfort of John. Peter rashly, according to his usual habit, assumed that because Jesus had specially predicted the death of one, he must be ready to predict the death of all. And not only so, but with that curiosity which obtruded itself on every occasion, he forgot for a moment his own solemn concerns and duties, which ought then to have absorbed his mind, and turning round and seeing John, he inquisitively asks, "Tell me something about him!" like many people still, who are more anxious to learn about their

neighbors, than they are to act solemnly about themselves ; who would rather inquire, What is the character of my friend, my acquaintance ? than What is my own ? and who are in most cases painful proofs of the fact that the portion of life least known to a man is often that little part he has lived in the few years that have already passed away.

Now, suppose our Lord had told Peter, in answer to his question, when John should die ; or suppose what was a special prediction in the case of a single individual, on grounds which we cannot now discover, he should have stated to all and every one, and specified long before, the time, the place, and the nature of each individual death ; suppose that we had only to open the Bible, in order to ascertain when, and where, and how we shall each die. We often wish as much. It is a question that we all sometimes entertain, " Am I to die young, in manhood, or in old age ? Am I to die amid the sympathies of friends, amid the assiduities of the near and the dear ; or on the quarter-deck, or on the field of battle ? Or is the ocean to be my shroud, and its ceaseless sound my last requiem ? " These and similar questions we have too often asked : it is perhaps natural enough to ask them ; but would the answer do us any good ? None. We know the fact, that we must die, and at latest soon : this alone should stimulate us to seek instantly peace with God through Jesus Christ. But the how, the when, the where is wrapped in an obscurity that God has wisely and mercifully not unveiled, and that it does not seem good for us, even if possible, to penetrate. The answer given to Peter is the most proper he could have had. Jesus does not satisfy the curious inquiry of Peter : Jesus never refused an answer that would be useful, but he always refused an answer that would merely satisfy curiosity.

The book, the Bible, partakes of the spirit of the blessed Master. Of all books upon earth the Bible least satisfies an idle curiosity ; but of all books that were ever writ-

ten, it most satisfies the deepest yearnings of the human heart. But if I had been writing a book, and wished that book to be popular, what course should I have taken? Just those points that the Bible has left untouched I would have touched; just those gaps that the Bible has left unfilled, I would have filled. I would have told you what Lazarus felt as the soul leaped from the body, like the sword from its scabbard; I would have told you what Lazarus felt when he mingled with the choirs, and with the cherubim, and with the company of the blessed. I would have told you how he felt when separate from the body; what he saw in the third heaven; how he felt as he came back; and how he felt, and what his sensations were, when he took possession of the cold and deserted shrine that laid several days in the grave. Your curiosity would have been kindled: everybody would read such a book; everybody would have been interested with such inquiries. But the Bible upon these subjects is dumb; nay more, it condemns the very discussion and entertainment of them. The Bible is a book for the enlightenment of the mind, for the sanctification of the soul, for the comfort of the heart, for the salvation of sinners; but nowhere and never does it minister to an idle, a paltry, and a worthless curiosity.

Is not this an indirect proof of its origin? Touching, mind you, the margin of the unseen, dealing with the shores of that unsounded ocean that is between us and eternity, naturally it might have been expected to say much that was intensely curious; but singularly enough, it is silent, altogether silent; and silent where we wish sometimes it would have spoken; but never silent without conclusive reasons for being so. Do you recollect that question, "Lord, are there many that be saved?" That is a very curious question,—a question we sometimes entertain; but what was the Bible's answer, or rather the Lord's answer? "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Now, no human teacher

would have ever said that ; he would have entered into a discussion at once. But the extraordinary practical, personal appeals of the Bible to man's conscience, and to man's heart, and its utter and universal refusal to gratify man's itching curiosity, is to my mind one of its most magnificent credentials as the word and the inspiration of God.

Our Lord therefore says to Peter, "What is that to thee?" This does not mean that Peter was not to sympathize with John ; it does not mean that he was not to be his brother's keeper ; it does not mean he was to become selfish ; but only that he was not to become curious. It is one thing to help another, to sympathize with a brother, and in every respect to comfort a mourner ; it is quite another thing to pry into the future biography of another, and try to fish up from the depths of that silent sea facts and phenomena which were never meant for man to know.

Notice, in the next place, in our Lord's reply, his sovereignty. "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" This answer lifts the veil, and lets forth, incidentally provoked by the question of Peter, the beautiful and blessed truth that our life is not dependent upon chance, upon incident, or upon accident, but upon the will and sovereignty of Christ the Lord. He says, "If I will that he tarry till I come." His will is the law and limit of my life. That will is transmitted through the whole series of second causes, as the lightning is transmitted through a chain, disturbing nothing, yet conveying its behests, — its force and its effects, to all. That will of Christ's is operative everywhere. "If I will that he be spared," is applicable to man in every scene of peril, in every sphere of contagion, — at home, on the land, on the ocean, everywhere and always. The heart cannot miss a beat, the pulse cannot falter in its pulsations ; much less can either stand still without an order coming from the throne — "I will : Let the soul be severed

from the body." Each of us — noble thought! — is immortal till God has nothing more for us to do; and when our mission is done, and our work is finished, then his will, — not chance, not accident, not the fagot, not the sword, not the scimitar, not disease, not pestilence, not famine, but the will of Christ, — ends our days; takes the pilgrim from the tent to the house not made with hands, the wanderer from the desert to a home beyond the stars. What a beautiful thought is that, "If I will!" it is the law and the limit of the length of our days.

But notice, in this beautiful reply, another word that is suggestive. "If I will that he *tarry* till I come, what is that to thee?" The word *tarry* indicates that life is a journey. To *tarry* on a journey is what we deprecate; and here he says, he that lives longest in this world *tarries* the longest; he that is taken early home is most beloved. He that lives longest is not necessarily the most beloved: he that lives long is suffered to *tarry*, — he is not taken to his home as speedily as he would; but the flower that is cut down as soon as it blossoms, is specially beloved, — it is transplanted from a wintry and an ungenial clime to its own native and balmy air, — to blossom no longer in the refracted and clouded sunshine, but in the full brightness of the sunshine of that Sun whose day has no cloud to dim it, and no night to close it. It is thus that *tarry* indicates a journey, and indicates too that he that has walked longest in it is least favored.

And then, says the Lord, "What if he *tarry* till I come?" Then Christ's Second Advent is a future fact. It is here intimated; it is constantly predicted throughout Scripture. "Till I come again." He came first like the light dawning softly and gently on the world; but he will come the second time not like the light, but like the lightning bursting in unexpected splendor, and shining from the east even unto the distant west. And when he comes again, some will be

found waiting till he come. He says, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" You ask — and it is not a curious question, because it is a question answered — Will any be found living when Christ comes again? The apostle tells us plainly that "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent — that is, go before — them which are asleep." Then some will be alive; some of your children, either yourselves, or your children, or your children's children, will never die. What a thought it is! some will be alive when the Lord comes. And what a blessed transformation will theirs be! In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, gray hair, and wrinkles, and dimness of sight, and deadness of hearing, will burst into immortal and joyous youth; and the transition from this mortal to that immortal will be instant, glorious, and blessed. Some, then, will remain till the Lord come, and be changed in a moment to his own glorious image; we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

But notice, from this, another lesson. "What is that to *thee*? follow *thou* me." Religion is, then, a personal thing. "What is that to *thee*? follow *thou* me." "What must *I* do to be saved?" The great and the first question that every man in this assembly ought to settle is his own personal safety in the sight of God, and in the prospect of a judgment morn. And after that he may entertain many an interesting question, not laid aside and renounced for ever, but only postponed to a proper and convenient season. But in the mean time to stand on a ship that is blazing in the flames, and to count how many succeed in escaping; or to stand upon a ship sinking inch by inch into the deep, and to count the numbers that are getting into the boat or upon the raft, but careless about himself, is only a dim and imperfect type

of the conduct of that man who entertains a thousand curious — it may be interesting, it may be in their place important — questions, but never prayerfully and in the depths of his heart has asked, and sought an answer to the most momentous of all, “What must I do to be saved?”

Notice, in the next place, from this answer, “Follow thou me,” that all duties are in the present. “Follow thou me.” “Instead of conjecturing about John, instead of thinking curiously about the incidents of another man’s life, you, Peter, engage in instant duty.” And this is suggestive too of another fact. What made Peter speculate? Looking off from Christ. When was it that he asked the question, “What shall this man do?” It is said that after Jesus said to Peter, “Follow me; then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following.” What business had he turning about? The command was, “Follow me:” and if he had followed Christ, he would have been so impressed by the glory of that Glorious One, that all other questions would have been absorbed in thoughts of his brightness. But Peter faltered for a moment; instead of looking at Christ, he turned round and looked behind him. And then he began to speculate about the future biography of John. Our Lord therefore says, “Cease your speculating; turn aside from curious inquiries; do not look behind you like Lot’s wife; but look to me; follow me; let me efface such curious questions from your heart; and then your questions will be anxious, interesting, solemn, important; not merely speculative and curious.”

Thus Peter was rebuked gently for his speculative inquiries; reminded of the peril of turning to the right hand or to the left; when Jesus told him that if it was his will that John should tarry till the second advent, that was no concern of his. But it is added very strikingly, evidently to teach us a very important lesson, “Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not

die." This is the first and earliest tradition that we have ; and it is, like almost all the traditions that have floated like driftwood down the ages, perverted, corrupted, and caricatured. The simple statement of Jesus was, " If I will ; " that is, hypothetically. The distorted perversion of tradition was, " that that disciple should not die." We thus find Christ's words as heard were distorted and perverted by tradition ; and we know it as a fact, that Christ's words as written may be distorted in meaning by tradition still ; not because his words are obscure, but because our hearts are perverse ; not because his word is dark, but because our minds need light. Tradition, we learn from this, is a precarious depository, a defective witness. The first instance of its occurrence is proof that it is not to be trusted. But very strikingly, and highly instructively to us, God's Word steps in, corrects the distorted tradition of man, and shows what was true, " Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die ; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? "

Now, what do you see here ? The Church of Rome says tradition is to explain the Bible ; but the Word of God says that the Bible is to explain tradition. We here find tradition went wrong ; and that God's Word was its instant corrective. And instead, therefore, of turning to tradition to explain the Bible, or to teach us its meaning, we rather read the Bible to keep right tradition, and to instruct it in its duty. We do not object to tradition, Protestants do not object to tradition, — all we ask is this, if you have a statement not contained in the Bible, couched in words that you believe to be divine, that you will demonstrate it to me by as strong proof as that by which I can prove the Bible to be from God, and show that your tradition was heard by an apostle, and recorded by him that heard it, then I will accept your tradition as reverently as I accept the Bible. But if you merely assert that this is tradition, because A



heard it from B, and B heard it from C, and C heard it he knew not where ; then, instead of taking your dim, misty, precarious tradition, to explain the plain, the clear, the obvious Bible, I must reverse the process, and take the plain and intelligible Bible, either to test, or to explain, or to refute your misty and precarious tradition. At all events, never forget that the first instance on record of tradition is proof of its corrupt and corrupting tendency ; and that one of the earliest applications of the Bible upon record is an application of it to correct man's tradition by God's own holy Word.

Let us notice now what the whole of Christianity is. It consists in this, "Follow thou me." Now to comply with that is to be a Christian. And first, we learn from this, that Christianity is first of all personal relation to, and communion with Christ. The prescription of Jesus is not, "Follow a sect, assume a name, pronounce a *shibboleth*, belong to a party ;" but, Follow Christ. And in the next place, we learn that Christianity here is altogether a practical thing. It is not, "Approve of my claims, believe my words, compliment me, praise me, eulogize my religion ;" but it is, "Follow thou me." And in the next place, we learn that this duty is not a duty to be postponed to the future, but to be fulfilled in the present. It is not, "Wait till a convenient season ;" there is no such modifying element introduced as, "Go first and bury your dead ;" but it is, "Rise now ; follow me now." All duties are in the present, they never lie or are placed in the future.

But did these words as addressed to Peter cease to be applicable when Jesus ascended? No. Peter lived many years after the ascent of our Lord ; and therefore his words, "Follow thou me," cannot be restricted to Peter, but are applicable to Christian men, who, like him, existed upon earth. They must therefore belong to us. They were applicable to Peter after the ascent of our Lord ; and indeed

the epithets which are most frequent in Scripture are, "Followers of Christ," "Followers of me;" "These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." If such be the meaning of it, in what respect are we to follow Christ? We are to follow him first as the teacher; receiving his lessons as conclusive, his law as final, his word as that which settles all disputes, and puts an end to all discussions. We are secondly to follow Christ as our example. Whilst he is an atonement we are to trust in for forgiveness, he is also the perfect and beautiful example that we are to follow for imitation. If you will read that striking biography, the biography of Christ, you will find that he has left us in every sphere — left deep upon the sands of time — foot-prints we do well to follow, and following which, we shall number ourselves among them who follow him, and are the inheritors of the promises. In his appeals to Scripture we are to follow him; in his joys we are to follow him; in his sorrows we are to follow him; in his triumph over the world and his dwelling upon it we are to follow him. The just man of Plato, the perfect man that humanity sighed for, is found in Christ. Never did such maxims fall from human lips; never did such an example rise and shine upon the world as his. It is impossible to account for so perfect, spotless, holy an example, — the spirit in which he spake, the perfection with which he lived, the meekness with which he died, — except by believing that he was God manifest in the flesh; the great Atonement for sin, the great Example to mankind.

And in following Jesus in all these capacities, we are to follow him specially with the heart. In all religion, my dear friends, the great requirement is the heart. Satan will be delighted at your discussing organs, liturgies, episcopacy, presbytery, and all the ceremonial details which have constituted the chief controversies of Christendom, if he can only keep you from giving up your heart to God. It is the heart

in prayer that gives that prayer its excellence, whether it be written upon the page of a liturgy, or breathed warm and living from the loving heart. If the heart be absent, the sweetest music has no charms ; if the heart be not in prayer, the most beautiful form has no beauty. In all our acts of worship God's first requirement is, " Give me thy heart." In our following our Lord we are not like Lot's wife, who followed her husband bodily, but left her heart in Sodom ; so we are not to follow Christ by the profession of baptism, whilst our heart is beating in the world behind us.

And we are to follow Christ not only with the heart, but we are to do it openly. If we will not confess him before men, he says he will not confess us before his Father who is in heaven. We need not be ostentatious, and yet we must not conceal our Christianity. A symptom of a sickly conviction, or of a hypocritical religion, is ostentation, pride ; but the evidence of living religion is to be seen, nay, not to be seen, it is to be felt ; like the great law of gravitation, silent in itself, but balancing the stars in their orbits, and giving harmony, consistency, order, and law to all. Men are to take notice of us that we have been with Jesus, not by the loudness of our profession, but by the depth, the fervor, the consistency of our Christian life.

And lastly, we are to follow Christ fully. We are not to say, " We will follow up to that point ; but there our interest leaves us : " or, " We will follow up to that point ; but there the world's frown meets us." If it be Christ's will, we are to do it, if all the world should denounce us. What is not his will, we are not to do, if it be clearly contrary to his will, though all the world should applaud it. Our first question, and our chiefest inquiry must be, " What says the Scripture ? Is this Christ's will ? " and that will settle a great many questions that are extremely delicate discussed in themselves, but that at once are resolved if they are

looked at in the light of truth, and in contrast with Christ's holy example. In sunshine and in cloud, in prosperity and in adversity, in our wealth and in our tribulation, let us follow him; listening to his word, copying his example, resting on his sacrifice, and looking, through his merits, for the glory that is to be revealed. Speculating on no curious questions, asking no gratification of our curiosity; but desirous only to know what is duty, that we may fulfil it; what is Christ's will, that we may obey it; and what is his perfect example, that with all our heart, and strength, and soul, we may follow him.

His followers in life, we die in him, the heirs of his eternal glory. To live has been Christ, and to die is great gain. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Whether we die old or young, — at home or in exile, — on the field of battle amid the shouts of foes, or in bed amid the kind sympathies of friends, has no effect on our everlasting destiny. To die in Christ is peace anywhere and always.

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NOTE. — [25.] The purpose of this verse seems to be to assert and vindicate the fragmentary character of the Gospel; for that the doings of the Lord were so many — his life so rich in matter of record — that, in a popular hyperbole, we can hardly imagine the world containing them all, if singly written down; thus setting forth the superfluity and cumbrousness of any thing like a perfect detail in the strongest terms, — and in terms which certainly look as if fault had been found with this Gospel for want of completeness by some objectors. This chapter was written by John himself. Of this I am fully convinced. In every part of it his hand is plain and unmistakable. I believe it to have been added some years probably after the completion of the Gospel, partly perhaps to record the important miracle of the second draught of fishes, so full of spiritual instruction, and the interesting account of the sayings of the Lord to Peter; but principally to meet the error which was becoming prevalent concerning himself. In order to do this, he gives a complete account with all

minute details — even to the number of the fish caught — of the circumstances preceding the conversation, and the very words of the Lord himself; not pretending to put a meaning on those words, but merely asserting that they announced no such thing as that he should not die. Surely nothing can be more natural than this. External evidence completely tallies with this view. The chapter is contained in all the principal MSS., and there is no greater variety of reading. In these respects it differs remarkably from John vii. 53, viii. 11, and indeed from even Mark xvi. 9-20. Internal evidence of style and diction is nearly balanced. It certainly contains several words and constructions not met with elsewhere in John; but, on the other hand, the whole cast of it is his, — the train of thought and manner of narration. And all allowance should be made for the double alteration of style of writing which would be likely to be brought about by lapse of time and by the very nature of the appendix, — a fragment, not forming part of a whole written continuously, but standing by itself. The last two verses, from their contents, we might expect to have more of the epistolary form; and accordingly we find them singularly in style resembling the Epistles of John. — *Alford.*

## UNDESIGNED AND SUGGESTIVE COINCIDENCES IN THE FOUR GOSPELS.

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I DO not here design to adduce proofs that Christianity is true, or that the Bible is inspired; but having read with great interest and information an admirable work, pretty well known, because published some years, called Blunt's Scriptural Coincidences, a Professor in the University of Cambridge, I have tried to make use of some interesting incidental coincidences which that acute and ingenious scholar has detected in the Bible, beginning, as he does, at Genesis, and closing with Revelation, in illustrating first the authenticity of the Gospel; secondly, that the writers of the Gospel wrote independently of each other; and lastly, that such coincidences, latent to the superficial reader, occurring in scattered groups throughout the sacred page, prove that the evangelists were the living witnesses of the facts and circumstances which they so beautifully describe. Aided by the suggestions of the learned Professor, I will select some of those coincidences in the Gospel of St. Matthew, especially, that are the most striking. In Matthew iv. 18, we read, "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with

Zebedee their father, mending their nets." Now, the incidental allusion I wish to notice is that apparently very unimportant one, "mending their nets." It will show you, by comparison with the statement in Luke, how the two evangelists distinct from each other must have looked at the very same scene, and from different points of view described the very same circumstance. Accordingly, in Luke v. we read, "And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret," — the same lake differently described, — "and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." The latent thought we trace in connection with these two passages is, that the statement in the first by the evangelist Matthew indicates the net was old, and broken, and needing to be mended; the statement in the evangelist Luke is, that when the same net, at the very same scene, is cast in, from its old and wasted nature it was unable to bear the full strain or pressure to which it was subjected, and naturally broke. Now this simple incident indicates that the two evangelists were separate from each other, describing precisely the same persons, and that the narrative of each is literally true; the one hinting unconsciously what the other more fully narrates, and the second illustrating at greater length the very conditions which the other has described.

Let me take another instance of the same kind. We find in Matthew iv. 21 — the same verse I have quoted before — “And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father.” Now it is quite plain that the father of these two sons, namely, John and James, was alive. We pass on to Matthew viii. 21, and we find another allusion to the same two sons. “And another of his disciples said to him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.” I will show you the connection of this when I have quoted other two passages. Then I turn to Matthew xx. 20, “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping him.” Then the 27th chapter of this very same Gospel, at the 56th verse, we find these words, “Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.” Now in the first of these passages which I have quoted, when John and James were first called by Christ, you read that Zebedee their father was alive; when you come again to the last two verses that I have read, namely, Matthew xx. 20, and xxvii. 56, your natural inference would be, that the father must be dead; because the two sons present themselves again, but their mother only is with them now — the mother of Zebedee’s children, and not a word about the father. And when you come to the middle verse, Matthew viii. 21, you read of a disciple who asks leave to go and bury his father, evidently Zebedee. You see, therefore, that all these four passages relate to one; in each passage there is a touch that indicates connection, and so indicates that it was an actual witness of these facts that described them; and that it would have been utterly impossible for any man to have made such delicate, latent, incidental allusions, if he had been concocting a story or a picture out of his own imagination.

The next incident I will allude to is in Matthew viii. 14,



where you find these words, "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever." Now we know that whether Peter was married came to be a controversy in a subsequent era of the Christian Church. If this Gospel had been composed to meet that controversy in any shape or sense, it would have boldly, prominently, and in a controversial tone, stated the fact that Peter was married. But here the fact that Peter was married is not laid down as a broad assertion in the narrative, but it is let out as an incidental thing, where there was no idea of disputing it. It says that "Peter's wife's mother was sick of a fever." And you find this same incidental allusion strikingly corroborated when you go to St. Paul; for he says, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and *Cephas*?" The fact that the apostle Paul calls him by another name, *Cephas*, would indicate that he had not in his mind the allusion to Peter's wife's mother on the part of the evangelist Matthew. And therefore, out of two most incidental — if we were speaking after the manner of the world we should say most accidental — allusions, a great and important fact comes out, important for its subsequent application, not because of any internal doctrinal value in it for the sanctification of the heart and the justification of the soul.

Another incident is in Matthew viii. 16. There we read, "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick." Now the point that I wish to bring before you is, "*When the even was come* they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils." We naturally ask, why did they wait till the evening? If people were sick, you would have thought they would have tried to bring them by day. Let us read a little further, and we shall find the reason and explanation of

this. Turn with me to the 4th chapter of Luke's Gospel, at the 31st verse, which is the parallel passage, and you will find there, "He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days." We have ascertained that it was not only even, but in the parallel passage that it was the evening on the Sabbath day. But still that does not explain to us why they delayed to bring their sick till the evening. We go further on in the Gospel of St. Matthew, and we discover the reason. In Matthew xii. 10, we find it stated — "And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse him." Now at once the reason comes out. It says, they brought the sick to him in the evening: we turn to the parallel passage, and we find it was the evening of the Sabbath. We turn to a third passage, and we find that the Jews believed that it was unlawful to heal upon the Sabbath day; and therefore the reason why they waited till the Sabbath evening was, that they might not break that law, which forbade persons to be healed, however superstitiously, upon the Sabbath day. It is thus again that we see those latent links which show how truly the evangelists sketched from a living original, and how they were eye-witnesses of the facts which they record.

A very delicate allusion occurs in Matthew ix. 10, which is also worth noticing: "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples." Now you will notice how this same event is recorded by Mark. Recollect, Matthew here is recording his own conversion; let us now see how this same incident is recorded in Mark ii. 14: "And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him. And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and

sinner sat also together with Jesus and his disciples." Now just notice the difference. Matthew is so conscious that he is describing actual things that he says, "When he said, Follow me, he followed him; and Jesus sat in the house;" assuming that nobody could mistake he was describing his own house. It is so natural for the proprietor of the house to say, "He sat in the house." But when another evangelist describes the very same thing, he does not use the phrase, "in the house," which St. Matthew has used; but the possessive pronoun, and says, "He sat in his house" — that is, the house of Levi, or Matthew. Another difference here worth noticing occurs in Matthew x. 2: "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican." Now here is an interesting difference; in the same account given by Luke, and also by Mark, to which I need not refer, the order of the names is, Matthew and Thomas — giving Matthew the precedence which was rightfully his. But when Matthew describes the same thing, he gives himself the lowly place, and gives Thomas the precedence. In the next place, when Matthew describes himself as one of the apostles, he calls himself, "Matthew the publican." But when Mark and Luke give the very same catalogue, they omit the word "publican," and call him simply Matthew. Now you see here breaking out most beautifully the true humility of St. Matthew; putting himself in the lowly place, and applying to himself that name which was the common name for a great sinner among the Jews, "Matthew the publican." But when Mark and Luke describe the same thing, they detail the exact facts of the case, but set the beautiful example of omitting a single epithet that would wound, where wounding was neither sanctifying, nor humbling, nor good. We have therefore in the one case the finest precedent of lowliness

of mind ; we have in the other case a no less beautiful precedent of saying nothing that is evil of any, if we cannot say all that we could wish to say of good.

Let me notice another incident. The death of Joseph the husband of Mary must have occurred during the ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yet it is not so stated directly, but it is implied by every evangelist. I say the death of Joseph the husband of Mary must have occurred during the ministry of Jesus ; and though it is not stated expressly, yet it is implied in all the four evangelists. For instance in Matthew xii. 46, "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him." The mother and the brethren, but no mention of the father. In Mark vi. 3, we read, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon ? and are not his sisters here with us ?" If the father had been living, in all probability the father, so reputed, would have had his name mentioned here also. In Luke viii. 19, it is said, "Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press." Now the fact that the reputed or legal father of our Lord is referred to at the beginning, but that in all subsequent appearances of the family of Jesus — for it is evidently implied that the Virgin Mary had children subsequently to the birth of the Son of Man — Joseph is not seen :—the brothers of Jesus according to the flesh are all specially mentioned here ; but you have not a word about Joseph ;—now what is the necessary inference ? That Joseph must have died in the interval, and that Mary was a widow with her family, and as such often visited and saw our blessed Lord.

An instance occurs in Matthew xiv. 1 : "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead." Now the question that naturally occurs here is,

Why did he speak this, or say this to his servants? Why did Herod the tetrarch, when he heard of the fame of Jesus, say this to his servants — not to his chief ministers, not to his soldiers, but to his servants? The reason of this incidentally comes out in the 8th chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke, in the 2d and 3d verses, where “certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.” The reason is plain now why Herod said so to his servants — that some of his servants had been converted to the knowledge of the Gospel through the preaching of our blessed Lord. And therefore, when he heard of the fame of Jesus, “he said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist” — whom he had murdered — “he is risen from the dead.”

There is another feature also worth noticing in the case of Herod, which will cast light upon his character and his words. In Mark viii. 15, we read, “And Jesus charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.” In St. Matthew he says, “Beware of the leaven of the Sadducees.” The inference from this juxtaposition or parallelism shows us that Herod was what we know on other grounds and from other testimony he was — a Sadducee, or a disbeliever in the immortality of the soul, or in the resurrection of the body from the dead. Now then you find accordingly at the 7th verse of the 9th chapter of Luke, “Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Jesus: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead.” Why perplexed? Because he did not believe in the immortality of the soul, or in the resurrection of the dead, being a Sadducee; and it is incidentally stated in one Gospel that he was a Sadducee; it is incidentally mentioned in

another, without saying that he was a Sadducee, that he was perplexed when he heard of the fame of Jesus, some saying that John was risen from the dead; alleging, in another of the Gospels, it is said, that John was risen from the dead. But in this last Gospel he evidently shows that his conscience was stronger than his convictions; and that having perpetrated the heinous murder of John the Baptist, his conscience made him fear that he had risen from the dead to take retribution on the sin of which he had been guilty. Now these incidental allusions are most interesting as indicating the harmony of the Gospel, the independence of each writer, the reality of the facts they delineate and explain, and cast light at the same time upon expressions, that, without such incidental allusions scattered elsewhere, would be altogether inexplicable to us. I will give you another of these expressions, occurring in the Gospel of St. Matthew, that is and would be inexplicable except for an incidental clause in a parallel Gospel. It is in the 26th chapter of Matthew, where we read at the 67th verse, "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" Now this seems absurd. The persons that smote him were standing before him; how then could they ask him, "Prophecy, who smote thee?" Why you would say when you read this passage, How could he fail to state who smote him? He felt the blow; the person was standing beside him and before him; what meaning therefore, you naturally ask, is there in the expression, "Prophecy, who smote thee?" We could not answer that except by reference to a parallel passage, where an incidental thing creeps out that casts light upon the whole. In Luke xxii. 64 we read, "And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?" Now you have here the explanation at once, namely, that Jesus was

blindfolded; and when they said unto him in one Gospel, "Prophecy, unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?" it is easy to see, that being blindfolded he could not see the hand of the person who smote him; and that "Prophecy who smote thee?" is thus rendered perfectly intelligible — namely, that he could not see who they were that struck him the blow; and therefore in mockery they said to him, "Prophecy who it was that smote thee."

Another interesting incident creeps out from the charges in which Jesus was condemned. Let us look at the perfect consistency of what occurred by considering the different courts before which Jesus was brought. In Matthew xxvi. 65, "Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy." Now just notice what this court was before which Jesus was brought. It was a court or sanhedrim of the Scribes and the Pharisees; and the charge or the accusation against him there was appropriate to the ecclesiastical court before which it was lodged — namely, the charge of blasphemy. But when he is brought on another occasion, as is recorded in Luke's Gospel, the 23d chapter, before another court, you find the accusation or the charge assumes another shape. Accordingly we read, "And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ a King." Now you mark; when he is brought before the ecclesiastical court, the accusation assumes the shape of an ecclesiastical offence; when he is brought before a secular or civil court, the accusation assumes the shape of a civil or secular crime. Now the two evangelists do not notice the fact, or comment upon it; it is described with all the naturalness, if I may use the expression, of the actual occurrence. And you only discover the reasons of the dis-

tinnet accusation by studying the distinct and the independent tribunals before which Christ was successively brought. Again, in Matthew xxvi. 71, we find these words: "And when he"—that is, Peter—"was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." Now the question is, how that maid could know Peter; because the record is, that they came in a tumultuous crowd; yet Peter, when he was gone out into the porch, was seen by a maid, who said unto them, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." The question is, how could she distinguish Peter as a follower and a disciple of Christ in a tumultuous assembly, Peter standing or sitting at a distance; and knowing as we do too, from his character, that he kept as quiet and concealed as possible? We find the explanation of it at once by referring to John xviii. 16—"But Peter stood at the door"—the same place where we find him described as standing in Matthew. "Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high-priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter." He evidently went to the maid who had charge of the door, and said, "This Peter is my friend; he is a follower of Jesus. Will you allow him to pass in? He may be called upon in court to give evidence; it is necessary that you should give him leave to pass in." The maid was thus introduced to Peter, and Peter to her; and thus she easily recognized him as that fellow, as she called him, who was a companion of Jesus.

Another instance that indicates perfect unity pervading all these records is in Mark xv. 43, where it is said, "Joseph of Arimathea came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus."

Now, why is that word added—"boldly?" You would have thought that a person going to a superior would have asked very humbly. But something must have occurred, or



something must have been before, that made the evangelist notice here that he went boldly into the presence of Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. If you read the history of Joseph of Arimathea, you find he was a disciple of Jesus, John xix. 38 — “He was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews.” And therefore the other evangelist, in recording this act on the part of Joseph of Arimathea, notices that his fear, his secrecy — which he himself had not recorded, mind you — had all passed away; and he calls boldly upon Pilate to give up the body of Jesus. Now recollect the fact that Mark says nothing about Joseph as being a disciple secretly for fear of the Jews; the evangelist John, who wrote long after Mark, says, he was secretly a disciple for fear of the Jews, being a timid man. But Mark lets out a fact that shows that he knew his character, though he did not describe it, just as well as John knew it, who has described it subsequently at length; and therefore, to indicate that he knew his character, and with all the naturalness of a true sketch of Joseph, of a true historian of facts, he adds the words, “he went in boldly;” and that word casts light upon his whole character; shows that the curtain of his fears was lifted away; and that the heart that beat so devotedly in secret beats boldly and heroically now in the face of all his foes.

All I ask the reader to notice is the interesting interlinking of thought, of facts, and of incidents, in this process, that satisfactorily proves that the character was what it is vividly described to have been in one passage, while it is only brought out from an incidental allusion in another. And next, learn this most precious fact; that when you cannot discover the exact reason of a statement in one Gospel, yet by very diligent and laborious search you will find in another some long latent link that, brought into contact with the statement in the first, will show harmony where you thought there was discord, and unity where you

thought there was division; and the result will be more than ever triumphant in your mind, "Thy word, O God, is truth."

The next coincidence I will notice is in the second chapter of John's Gospel, where we read of the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, and Mary the mother of Jesus coming in, and saying, "They have no wine." Then the order of Jesus, in the 7th verse, "Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them to the brim." Then see the remark, in the 10th verse, of the governor of the feast: "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk" — that is, have drunk just enough, and not more than enough, — "then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." Now, why were these water-pots placed at this festival? The answer is, they were used by the Jews for washing their hands immediately before sitting down to partake of the feast that had been provided for them. You will notice here a coincidence that would not strike at the first; namely, that the feast must have advanced a considerable way, and near its close, before Jesus gave the order to replenish the vessels; and then turned the water with which they were replenished into wine. The fact that he said, "Fill the water-pots with water," proves that they had been emptied; but for what purpose emptied? The water had been all drawn off for the purpose of washing the hands of the guests, before they sat down to the feast. Then his order to fill these shows that the feast had begun, that it had proceeded far, when Jesus turned the water into wine; and the remark made by the governor of the feast shows that this was at the close of it: "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine: but thou hast kept the good wine until now" — that is, the end of the festival. Now, this simple coincidence is this. He does not state that the vessels had been emptied by the water being drawn off for washing the hands of the guests,

previous to the festival; but the narrative assumes an acquaintance of the universal usage, and carries, therefore, an air of candor, sincerity, and truth upon it, the more remarkable that he does not explain why the vessels were found empty at that particular period of the festival.

Another latent harmony is detected in the 3d chapter of the Gospel of St. John: "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night." Now, what I wish to notice here is this most interesting fact — that on every occasion where some one meets Jesus, the incident of the meeting, whatever that was, is made the text very much of the discourse. Thus, for instance, when the Capernaïtes followed him, in the 6th chapter of this Gospel, seeking for loaves made by a miracle, Jesus preached to them upon the living bread that cometh down from heaven. When the woman found him sitting at Jacob's well, and when he asked water to drink, and she made some remark upon the Jews having no communion with the Samaritans, Jesus immediately preached a sermon, suggested by the well, upon living water: "Whoso drinketh of this water of Jacob's well, shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." You see, therefore, when he spoke to the Capernaïtes, he made their hunger for literal bread the text that suggested a lesson on the bread of life. When the woman at Jacob's well spoke to him about water from that well, he made that a text suggestive of living water. Now, the feature in Nicodemus' arrival is, that he came to Jesus by night — that is, in darkness. Let us, therefore, see some of the great truths that Jesus speaks. Look at the 19th verse of the 3d chapter of St. John: "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that

doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." You can see, therefore, the reason for this peculiar line of thought upon light, and upon coming to the light, and upon loving the light, evidently suggested by the fact which you would not at first notice, — that Nicodemus was afraid to come to Jesus in daylight, and came to him only in the stillness and secrecy of night.

Another instance will come out, by referring to the visit of our Lord to the well of Jacob, and his remarks to the woman of Samaria — not as connected with living water, but on a subject distinct from that. You read in John iv. 5: "Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph." And after he had spoken to the woman a little, he says to her, at the 35th verse: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Now, what I wish you to notice is this: that coming to Sychar, a city in Samaria, he remarked to the woman that the fields were ripe to the harvest — that is, that there was a noble opportunity presented in that country of gathering souls as trophies of the power of the Gospel of Christ; in other words, that Samaria was ripe and ready for the Gospel. Now turn to a passage, as an illustration of this, which you will find in Acts viii. 5th, 6th, and 12th verses; and you will see how truly our Lord described the city of Samaria in this Gospel, by what subsequently occurred when a preacher went to Samaria (Acts viii. 5): "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria" — evidently the same Sychar that our Lord spoke about to the woman at the well of Samaria several years before —

“and preached Christ unto them” — that is, the Samaritans. “And the people” — that is, the Samaritans — “gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” Then at the 12th verse: “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Now, notice the interesting connection here. The assertion of our Lord to the woman of Samaria, four or five, or probably six, — nay, more than that, perhaps six or seven years before, — the assertion of our Lord was: “Your country is just ready for the Gospel; and if a preacher will go forth to preach, he will get souls for his hire, just as rapidly as a reaper that goes to cut down the ripe corn will get sheaves to reward him.” Well, now, the years pass away — several years at last pass away, and Philip goes down to this very place — probably not recollecting the 4th chapter of St. John, not then written; and he preaches to the people of Samaria, and the people, men and women, listen and believe, and are baptized and admitted into the Christian church. You have here, then, another striking proof of harmony between two speakers totally distinct and different from each other, in different places and under different circumstances; indicating the truthfulness of all that Jesus said, and the truthfulness also of the record of the results of Philip’s preaching.

The next passage I refer to is John xviii. 36: “Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews.” Now, what I wish to notice here is this. When Jesus said, — “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,” would not you have expected that some one present, while he was standing at the bar of the judge, would have said: “Why, one of your servants did

fight for you; for did not one of them (Peter) cut off the ear of Malchus, the high-priest's servant? And yet you talk as if your servants would not fight for you?" And to show how natural it would have been to expect this retort, you find in a previous passage that a relative of the man whose ear was cut off was actually present; for we read in verse 26th of this same chapter, "One of the servants of the high-priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" Then, how comes it to pass that this man, the kinsman of Malchus, whose ear was cut off by Peter's sword, did not stand up and say, "How can you talk about your kingdom being not of this world, and alleging that your servants would fight for you if it were, and saying that they do not and would not fight for you, because your kingdom is spiritual?" The reason comes out plainly enough, by referring to another Gospel, though the Evangelist was not thinking of the possibility of such a coincidence; for we read in Luke xxii. 50, the following statement, which will show the reason why this accusation was not brought forward: "And one of them" — that is, Peter — "smote the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him." Now you can see the secret. If they had brought forward the fact that Peter, one of his servants, did fight for him, and that the proof of it was that he cut off an ear of Malchus, a servant of the high-priest, they would have been constrained to produce the man; and they would have seen the part that was cut off restored, without a trace left behind of the wound; and this would have been irresistible proof that Jesus had power to work miracles; and this proof against what Jesus said would have done them more damage than by letting it alone. You can see, therefore, that there peeps out from the statement of another Evangelist, though not dreaming of any such use to be made of it, that

they kept this proof — you would have thought triumphant proof — against the statement of Jesus in secrecy and silence, because they could not have answered this argument of his without in the very answer bringing forward a proof that he could heal the sick, restore the ear to its place as was the other, and thus proved himself to be the Son of God, armed with all power in heaven and on earth.

Another evidence of truthfulness is in John xx. verses 4 to 8. Verse 4th: “So they” — that is, Peter and John — “ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.” Now, you will naturally say, this is a very minute statement; and minute statements made by an historian, always lay him open to exposure if he states what is untrue. Now, these minute statements are seen to be most just, exact, and accurate, by recollecting the two persons here described. Peter was a very old man: the evidence that he was so is a remark of our Lord at the close of this very Gospel, “When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself” — implying that Peter was now an old man. John, we know, was a very young man, for he lived long after Peter — forty or fifty years, — and died at a good old age, at the close of the first century. Knowing this, mark how each clause in the passage I have read, without the writer thinking of their being brought forward, proves these facts. “The two ran together; and the other disciple” — that is, John, who never calls himself by his own name, but always calls himself the other disciple, — “the other disciple did outrun Peter.” Why outrun him? Why,

the young man, John, outran, as you might expect, the old man, Peter. Well, then you go to the 5th verse; "And John stooping down, and looking, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in." A young person is timid, — naturally timid, — and, startled and amazed by the fact that the dead Saviour, as he thought, was not there, but the linen clothes carefully laid aside, he was frightened; and the consequence of this frightening, so natural to a young man, was, that he went not in. "Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre." Now, remember Peter's constant precipitancy. He rushed into the sea, and was almost drowned in trying to reach his Lord; and he displays here the characteristic feature that he always evinced: he does not stop to wait, whether danger or not; but the moment that his old and infirm limbs enabled him to reach the sepulchre, that moment he rushes in where John would scarcely dare to look in. We read in the 8th verse, "Then went in also that other disciple." Here the young man, at first naturally afraid, his fear dispelled by the fact that the aged man had gone into the sepulchre, and seen that there was nothing so extraordinary or supernatural as was likely to do them harm. Now, how completely does this narrative bear upon its face the evidence of reality — how evident that none but the writer of an actual occurrence, of an actual transaction, could have done this; and, therefore, so far a proof of the authenticity, genuineness, and truthfulness of the narrative.

It has been objected, in the next place, to the Gospel of St. John, that nowhere does he give an account of the ascension of our blessed Lord after his resurrection from the dead; and it has also been objected that nowhere does he give an account, minute and specific, of the Lord's Supper. And yet the moment you read the 13th chapter of the Gospel of St. John, you see that the institution of the Lord's Supper is implied; and, in the second place, when you read



the 20th chapter of St. John, at the 17th verse, you see that the ascension, which he does not describe, is implied and assumed as certain. For instance, John xx. 17: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father." Now, there is no record in this Gospel of the ascension; but yet there is an allusion to it so pointed, that you can at once see it was assumed as a fact, and that John leaves out the minute description of it purposely and designedly. So, in the 13th chapter of this same Gospel there is a sort of allusion to the Lord's Supper, but there is no record of its institution as there is in Matthew and in Luke. You can see, therefore, that John knew that the other evangelists had recorded this institution at full length; and he assumes the fact, and records what is connected with that fact at fuller length, and with greater minuteness.

Let me notice, in the next place, that, in reading through the Gospels, you must often have noticed that the great opponents of our Lord, and of his ministry, were always the Pharisees — very rarely the Sadducees, almost invariably the Pharisees. Hence our Lord's most solemn woes were denounced upon them: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." But again, when we pass the Gospels, and come to the Acts of the Apostles, a new feature turns up: the inveterate opponents of the apostles, and of their preaching, in the Acts, are no longer the Pharisees, but the Sadducees. Now, what can be the reason of this? In our Lord's personal ministry, the Pharisees were the great opponents; in the apostles', the Sadducees were the great opponents. Proof of this last is found in Acts iv. 1: "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them." Then again in Acts v. 17: "Then the high-priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Saddu-

cees), and were filled with indignation." Why, the reason is now very obvious. The Pharisees held the truths of the Jewish faith, or Christianity in figure; but the Sadducees denied the existence of the soul, and denied the resurrection from the dead. Now mark, while the Lord was upon the earth, the great truth that he taught was not the resurrection, but his own mission and the forgiveness of sins through his blood, his sacrifice, and his death. The Pharisees opposed this, because it was against the traditions of the fathers. But you will notice, when the apostles preached, in the Acts, the crowning fact that they constantly appealed to and made prominent was, that "Christ is risen from the dead, and is the first-fruits of them that slept." You will see, therefore, in the Acts of the Apostles, the peculiar preaching of the apostles — so peculiar that the resurrection of the dead was a distinguishing and prominent tenet, as being a proof that Christ was the Messiah; and the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, silent in the Gospels while their own dogmas are not touched, now break out in the Acts, and oppose the preachers of a doctrine which they believed to be no doctrine of truth at all. Now, this is another latent proof of the reality of the narrative, and of the truthfulness of all that is written.

I will give you, in conclusion, and with which I end the subject we have been considering, two or three remarks that are confirmed by Josephus, the Jewish historian. In the Gospel of St. Matthew (ii. 3) we read: "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled." Then, at the 7th verse of the same chapter: "Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." Now, what is indicated here? That Herod was in some state of alarm; he heard

that a king was born to the Jews: he held his throne by a very precarious tenure; and we should infer that he was a man of a very anxious mind — anxious, partly from his sense of guilt, partly from the structure of his mind; and, therefore, on two occasions we read of here, he was troubled when he heard of these things, gathered together the chief priests and scribes, and demanded of them where Christ should be born. And, again: “When he had privily called unto him the wise men, he inquired of them diligently” — evidently, with anxious curiosity. Now, when we open the pages of Josephus, the Jewish historian, for a sketch, we find him described in this way: that Herod, before his elevation to the throne, sent for a prophet, reputed to be a prophet, and inquired of him whether he ever should be king, and should succeed to the throne. He was told, Yes. After he was seated on the throne, and all seemed perfectly safe, he sent for this person again, says Josephus, and inquired how long he should live, — how long he should reign, and occupy that throne. You see, therefore, from this simple statement of Josephus, — altogether distinct from the New Testament narrative, — that Herod was, from some reason, a man of an extremely anxious mind, afraid that he should lose his throne; and willing to consult anybody and everybody that would give him some assurance that he should live and die a king. Now, how thoroughly does this fall in with and confirm what is recorded by St. Matthew of the anxiety of Herod, when he heard of some one who was born who should be king of the Jews.

Again, in Matthew ii. 19, we read as follows: “But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead” — that is, Herod — “which sought the young child’s life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when

he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither." Now, this seems strange to us, when he was told that Herod, the persecutor of the infant Jesus, was dead, and that he might now go to the land of Judæa, he learns by the way that Archelaus was the successor of Herod, and now reigned in his country: and the moment he heard this, upon his way to Jerusalem, we are told that he refused, or at least was afraid, to go thither, as he had been commanded. Now, if we restrict ourselves to the sacred narrative, we cannot understand why he should have been afraid of Archelaus, while he had apparently, as far as it goes, no evidence that Archelaus was a persecutor. But when we open the pages of Josephus, there comes out a fact that shows how well founded was the fear of Joseph, and how true this chapter is, how true to circumstances, that records this fear. For we read in Josephus, that Archelaus, on his accession to the throne, put to death two Jews who removed the golden eagle from a prominent place in the Jewish temple, being, as they thought, a desecration; and for this simple act they were put to death by Archelaus. Such murmurs arose among the people against the cruelty of Archelaus, putting to death two Jews who had only done what they felt it their duty to do, that Archelaus, to put down their murmurs, ordered out a body of cavalry, at the great Passover, and slaughtered without mercy three thousand Jews. Now, when did this occur? Just at the very moment that Archelaus succeeded to the throne. Joseph had heard that Herod was dead, and he learns by the way that his successor was Archelaus; and he learned also by the way the fact that had just taken place at the very accession of Archelaus — that he had been guilty of such murderous cruelty; and he naturally feared that the young child would meet with a worse reception from Archelaus than even from Herod, if Herod had continued on the throne still. You see, then, how true to fact each passage is; and

what indirect evidence it is of the authenticity, and truthfulness, and reality of these narratives.

One more, and I have done. It is in the Gospel of St. Mark, v. 11. We read in the 1st verse, "And they came over the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes." Then go on to the 11th verse: "Now there was there" — that is, in the country of the Gadarenes, — "nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of swine feeding." It has been objected, and with great apparent plausibility, by acute minds, that this narrative cannot be true, because the Jews were forbidden to keep swine. Certainly, no swine were allowed in the Jewish country at all, or wherever in Palestine the Jews were. Well, the answer that has been often given to this difficulty has been, that the Jews had employed some Gentiles to keep the swine for them. But that does not meet the difficulty, because the real difficulty lies in this — that the Jews were prohibited from keeping swine at all in their own country, directly or indirectly. We should not be able to find out the true reason, if we had not the history of Josephus to go to; and accordingly Josephus says, that Joppa and Jerusalem were subject to Archelaus — that is, the king I have spoken of; — that these were Jewish provinces; but that Gadara, being a Greek city, was annexed to Cæsar. Now, at once the reason comes out: Gadara was a Greek city, was under the jurisdiction of Cæsar, was not under that of Archelaus; and therefore it was lawful to keep swine in a Gentile city, while it was unlawful to do so in a Jewish one.

Now, what does all this teach us? That when we meet with difficulties in the word of God, we must not suppose they are contradictions, because we cannot see harmony. If we had never read this in the historian Josephus, we could have never been able to meet the difficulty, how swine could have been kept in a Jewish country. Or if you had never read in Josephus, that Archelaus was guilty of such

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